

THE PELICAN SHAKESPEA



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# King Lear

KREDEL



THE PELICAN SHAKESPEARE  
GENERAL EDITOR ALFRED HARBAGE



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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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KING LEAR

EDITED BY ALFRED HARBAGE

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Soon after the thirty-eight volumes forming *The Pelican Shakespeare* had been published, they were brought together in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*. The editorial revisions and new textual features are explained in detail in the General Editor's Preface to the one-volume edition. They have all been incorporated in the present volume. The following should be mentioned in particular:

The lines are not numbered in arbitrary units. Instead all lines are numbered which contain a word, phrase, or allusion explained in the glossarial notes. In the occasional instances where there is a long stretch of unannotated text, certain lines are numbered in italics to serve the conventional reference purpose.

The intrusive and often inaccurate place-headings inserted by early editors are omitted (as is becoming standard practise), but for the convenience of those who miss them, an indication of locale now appears as first item in the annotation of each scene.

In the interest of both elegance and utility, each speech-prefix is set in a separate line when the speaker's lines are in verse, except when these words form the second half of a pentameter line. Thus the verse form of the speech is kept visually intact, and turned-over lines are avoided. What is printed as verse and what is printed as prose has, in general, the authority of the original texts. Departures from the original texts in this regard have only the authority of editorial tradition and the judgment of the Pelican editors; and, in a few instances, are admittedly arbitrary.

# SHAKESPEARE AND HIS STAGE

William Shakespeare was christened in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, April 26, 1564. His birth is traditionally assigned to April 23. He was the eldest of four boys and two girls who survived infancy in the family of John Shakespeare, glover and trader of Henley Street, and his wife Mary Arden, daughter of a small landowner of Wilmcote. In 1568 John was elected Bailiff (equivalent to Mayor) of Stratford, having already filled the minor municipal offices. The town maintained for the sons of the burgesses a free school, taught by a university graduate and offering preparation in Latin sufficient for university entrance; its early registers are lost, but there can be little doubt that Shakespeare received the formal part of his education in this school.

On November 27, 1582, a license was issued for the marriage of William Shakespeare (aged eighteen) and Ann Hathaway (aged twenty-six), and on May 26, 1583, their child Susanna was christened in Holy Trinity Church. The inference that the marriage was forced upon the youth is natural but not inevitable; betrothal was legally binding at the time, and was sometimes regarded as conferring conjugal rights. Two additional children of the marriage, the twins Hamnet and Judith, were christened on February 2, 1585. Meanwhile the prosperity of the elder Shakespeares had declined, and William was impelled to seek a career outside Stratford.

The tradition that he spent some time as a country

teacher is old but unverifiable. Because of the absence of records his early twenties are called the "lost years," and only one thing about them is certain – that at least some of these years were spent in winning a place in the acting profession. He may have begun as a provincial trumper, but by 1592 he was established in London and prominent enough to be attacked. In a pamphlet of that year, *Groats-worth of Wit*, the ailing Robert Greene complained of the neglect which university writers like himself had suffered from actors, one of whom was daring to set up as a playwright :

... an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.

The pun on his name, and the parody of his line "O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide" (*3 Henry VI*), pointed clearly to Shakespeare. Some of his admirers protested, and Henry Chettle, the editor of Greene's pamphlet, saw fit to apologize :

... I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he excelent in the qualitie he professes : Besides, diuers of worship haue reported his vprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that approoues his Art. (Prefatory epistle, *Kind-Harts Dreame*)

The plague closed the London theatres for many months in 1592-94, denying the actors their livelihood. To this period belong Shakespeare's two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, both dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. No doubt the poet was rewarded with a gift of money as usual in such cases, but he did no further dedicating and we have no reliable information on whether Southampton, or anyone else, became his regular patron. His sonnets, first mentioned in 1598 and published without his consent in 1609, are intimate without being

explicitly autobiographical. They seem to commemorate the poet's friendship with an idealized youth, rivalry with a more favored poet, and love affair with a dark mistress ; and his bitterness when the mistress betrays him in conjunction with the friend ; but it is difficult to decide precisely what the "story" is, impossible to decide whether it is fictional or true. The true distinction of the sonnets, at least of those not purely conventional, rests in the universality of the thoughts and moods they express, and in their poignancy and beauty.

In 1594 was formed the theatrical company known until 1603 as the Lord Chamberlain's men, thereafter as the King's men. Its original membership included, besides Shakespeare, the beloved clown Will Kempe and the famous actor Richard Burbage. The company acted in various London theatres and even toured the provinces, but it is chiefly associated in our minds with the Globe Theatre built on the south bank of the Thames in 1599. Shakespeare was an actor and joint owner of this company (and its *Globe*) through the remainder of his creative years. His plays, written at the average rate of two a year, together with Burbage's acting won it its place of leadership among the London companies.

Individual plays began to appear in print, in editions both honest and piratical, and the publishers became increasingly aware of the value of Shakespeare's name on the title pages. As early as 1598 he was hailed as the leading English dramatist in the *Palladis Tamia* of Francis Meres :

As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage : for Comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne* [at one time in print but no longer extant, at least under this title], his *Midsummers night dream*, & his *Merchant of Venice* ; for Tragedy, his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Iuliet*.

The note is valuable both in indicating Shakespeare's prestige and in helping us to establish a chronology. In the second half of his writing career, history plays gave place to the great tragedies; and farces and light comedies gave place to the problem plays and symbolic romances. In 1623, seven years after his death, his former fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, cooperated with a group of London printers in bringing out his plays in collected form. The volume is generally known as the First Folio.

Shakespeare had never severed his relations with Stratford. His wife and children may sometimes have shared his London lodgings, but their home was Stratford. His son Hamnet was buried there in 1596, and his daughters Susanna and Judith were married there in 1607 and 1616 respectively. (His father, for whom he had secured a coat of arms and thus the privilege of writing himself gentleman, died in 1601, his mother in 1608.) His considerable earnings in London, as actor-sharer, part owner of the Globe, and playwright, were invested chiefly in Stratford property. In 1597 he purchased for £60 New Place, one of the two most imposing residences in the town. A number of other business transactions, as well as minor episodes in his career, have left documentary records. By 1611 he was in a position to retire, and he seems gradually to have withdrawn from theatrical activity in order to live in Stratford. In March, 1616, he made a will, leaving token bequests to Burbage, Heminge, and Condell, but the bulk of his estate to his family. The most famous feature of the will, the bequest of the second-best bed to his wife, reveals nothing about Shakespeare's marriage; the quaintness of the provision seems commonplace to those familiar with ancient testaments. Shakespeare died April 23, 1616, and was buried in the Stratford church where he had been christened. Within seven years a monument was erected to his memory on the north wall of the chancel. Its portrait bust and the Droeshout engraving on the title page of

the First Folio provide the only likenesses with an established claim to authenticity. The best verbal vignette was written by his rival Ben Jonson, the more impressive for being imbedded in a context mainly critical :

... I loved the man, and doe honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any. Hee was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature: had an excellent Phantsie, brave notions, and gentle expressions. . . . (*Timber or Discoveries*, ca. 1623-30)



The reader of Shakespeare's plays is aided by a general knowledge of the way in which they were staged. The King's men acquired a roofed and artificially lighted theatre only toward the close of Shakespeare's career, and then only for winter use. Nearly all his plays were designed for performance in such structures as the Globe - a three-tiered amphitheatre with a large rectangular platform extending to the center of its yard. The plays were staged by daylight, by large casts brilliantly costumed, but with only a minimum of properties, without scenery, and quite possibly without intermissions. There was a rear stage gallery for action "above," and a curtained rear recess for "discoveries" and other special effects, but by far the major portion of any play was enacted upon the projecting platform, with episode following episode in swift succession, and with shifts of time and place signaled the audience only by the momentary clearing of the stage between the episodes. Information about the identity of the characters and, when necessary, about the time and place of the action was incorporated in the dialogue. No place-headings have been inserted in the present editions; these are apt to obscure the original fluidity of structure, with the emphasis upon action and speech rather than scenic background. (Indications of place are supplied in the footnotes.) The acting, including that of the youthful apprentices to the profession who performed the parts of

women, was highly skillful, with a premium placed upon grace of gesture and beauty of diction. The audiences, a cross section of the general public, commonly numbered a thousand, sometimes more than two thousand. Judged by the type of plays they applauded, these audiences were not only large but also perceptive.

## THE TEXTS OF THE PLAYS

About half of Shakespeare's plays appeared in print for the first time in the folio volume of 1623. The others had been published individually, usually in quarto volumes, during his lifetime or in the six years following his death. The copy used by the printers of the quartos varied greatly in merit, sometimes representing Shakespeare's true text, sometimes only a debased version of that text. The copy used by the printers of the folio also varied in merit, but was chosen with care. Since it consisted of the best available manuscripts, or the more acceptable quartos (although frequently in editions other than the first), or of quartos corrected by reference to manuscripts, we have good or reasonably good texts of most of the thirty-seven plays.

In the present series, the plays have been newly edited from quarto or folio texts, depending, when a choice offered, upon which is now regarded by bibliographical specialists as the more authoritative. The ideal has been to reproduce the chosen texts with as few alterations as possible, beyond occasional relineation, expansion of abbreviations, and modernization of punctuation and spelling. Emendation is held to a minimum, and such material as has been added, in the way of stage directions and lines supplied by an alternative text, has been enclosed in square brackets.

None of the plays printed in Shakespeare's lifetime were divided into acts and scenes, and the inference is that the

## THE TEXTS OF THE PLAYS

author's own manuscripts were not so divided. In the folio collection, some of the plays remained undivided, some were divided into acts, and some were divided into acts and scenes. During the eighteenth century all of the plays were divided into acts and scenes, and in the Cambridge edition of the mid-nineteenth century, from which the influential *Globe* text derived, this division was more or less regularized and the lines were numbered. Many useful works of reference employ the act-scene-line apparatus thus established.

Since this act-scene division is obviously convenient, but is of very dubious authority so far as Shakespeare's own structural principles are concerned, or the original manner of staging his plays, a problem is presented to modern editors. In the present series the act-scene division is retained marginally, and may be viewed as a reference aid like the line numbering. A star marks the points of division when these points have been determined by a cleared stage indicating a shift of time and place in the action of the play, or when no harm results from the editorial assumption that there is such a shift. However, at those points where the established division is clearly misleading — that is, where continuous action has been split up into separate "scenes" — the star is omitted and the distortion corrected. This mechanical expedient seemed the best means of combining utility and accuracy.

THE GENERAL EDITOR

# INTRODUCTION

The play begins with a moment of prose “exposition,” an idle conversation about the partition of a kingdom and the bastardy of a son. Its tone is casual, jocular, polite. The son responds decorously to a social introduction. The speakers are wearing familiar masks. It is then as if these murmurs by the portal subsided at the opening of some old but half-remembered ceremony. All is ritual – heralding trumpet, formal procession, symbolic objects in coronet and map, a sequence of arbitrary yet strangely predictable acts. What can be made of it? Why should that patriarch who wishes to yield up his power and possessions require of the receivers declarations of love? Why should that maiden who honestly loves him respond only with declarations of her love of honesty? No logical reasons appear – ritual is ritual, its logic its own. Prose is yielding to poetry, “realism” to reality. *King Lear* is not true. It is an allegory of truth.

That its truths are not literal is the first thing about it discerned by the budding critical faculty. Everything is initially *patterned* – this one making obvious errors which he obviously will rue, these others emerging as the good and the evil in almost geometrical symmetry, with the inevitable sisters-three, the two elder chosen though wicked, the younger rejected though virtuous. Surely these are childish things! A defense has been offered by Tolstoy, in his valedictory judgment that the only truths

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conveyable in literature can be conveyed in the simplest folk-tale. But *King Lear* is not simple, and Tolstoy himself failed to see its relevance to his doctrine. Freud noticed its primitive features, and compared Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia to the caskets of lead, silver, and gold in *The Merchant of Venice*. He identified Cordelia as the benign, though resisted, call of death. Cordelia as the death-wish – *lovely and soothing death* – how suggestive this is ! until we recognize that her identification as the life-wish might be equally suggestive. The value of such reflections lies in their reminder that the oldest story-patterns have the greatest power to touch off reverberations. No other framework than this parable-myth could have borne so well the weight of what Shakespeare was compelled to say.

The story of Lear and his three daughters was given written form four centuries before Shakespeare's birth. How much older its components may be we do not know. Cordelia in one guise or another, including Cinderella's, has figured in the folklore of most cultures, perhaps originally expressing what Emerson saw as the conviction of every human being of his worthiness to be loved and chosen, if only his *true self* were truly known. The figure of the ruler asking a question, often a riddle, with disastrous consequences to himself is equally old and dispersed. In his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1136) Geoffrey of Monmouth converted folklore to history and established Lear and his daughters as rulers of ancient Britain, thus bequeathing them to the chronicles. Raphael Holinshed's (1587) declared that "Leir, the sonne of Baldud," came to the throne "in the yeare of the world 3105, at what time Joas reigned in Juda," but belief in the historicity of such British kings was now beginning to wane, and Shakespeare could deal freely with the record. He read the story also in John Higgins' lamentable verses in *The Firste part of the Mirour for Magistrates* (1574), and in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II, 10, 27–32. He knew, and may

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even have acted in, a bland dramatic version, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, published anonymously in 1605 but staged at least as early as 1594.

The printing of the old play may mark an effort to capitalize upon the staging of Shakespeare's, performed at court on December 26, 1606, and probably first brought out at the Globe playhouse sometime in 1605, although its allusion to "these late eclipses of the sun and moon" was not necessarily suggested by those of September and October of that year. The only certain anterior limit of date is March 16, 1603, when Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popishe Impostures* was registered for publication. That this excursion in "pseudo-demonology" was available to Shakespeare is evident in various ways, most clearly in the borrowed inventory of devils imbedded in Edgar's jargon as Tom o' Bedlam. It is of small consequence to fix the date of *King Lear* so far as its relation to the older play is concerned, which must be reckoned as analogue rather than source, but if, as seems certain, it was composed in 1605 or early 1606, it belongs to the same season of the poet's growth as *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

In its pre-Shakespearean forms, both those mentioned above and others, the Lear story remains rudimentary. The emphasis may vary in various recensions, depending upon whether the author was most interested in the inexpedience of subdividing a kingdom, the mutability of fortune, or, as in the older play, the rewards of Christian virtue; but all are alike in that they end happily for Lear, who is reconciled to Cordelia and restored to his throne. The fact that the story was sometimes followed by a sequel in which Cordelia was finally hounded to suicide by the broodlings of her wicked sisters has little bearing on a remarkable fact: Shakespeare alone and in defiance of precedent conducted Lear to ultimate misery. *Enter Lear, with Cordelia in his arms. . . . He dies.* These directions enclose a scene which demonstrates beyond any other in

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tragic literature the intransigence of poetic art – inventing the inevitable, investing horrifying things with beauty.

Compared with the tragedies of ancient Greece – and it is with these alone that one is tempted to compare it – *King Lear* suggests the Gothic order. Its form is irregular and organic, determined seemingly by a series of upward thrusts of mounting internal energy. There is even a Gothic element of the grotesque, as when mock-beggar, jester, and king, reduced to common condition, hold their mad juridical proceedings in a storm-lashed shelter, or when crazed king and blinded subject exchange lamentations and puns ! In the method of Lear's madness there is often a savage humor, more remarkable when all is said than his companioning with a Fool. It was the Fool, however, who seemed to the next age the unpardonable sin against classical decorum. In the 1680 adaptation by Nahum Tate he was expunged from the play, along with the tragic ending. Tate capped the concluding felicities of the pre-Shakespearean versions by huddling up a marriage between Edgar and Cordelia ; yet his work held the stage throughout the eighteenth century. It is always ruefully remarked that the greatest critic of the age approved the adaptation, but in fairness we should add that it was not for literary reasons. The pain of Shakespeare's concluding scenes was simply too much for Dr Johnson ; his response is preferable to that of those – fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils – who can read these scenes unmoved.

The original play, or its approximation, was restored to the stage in the early nineteenth century, after it had begun to receive its critical due from the romantic essayists and poets. It is a poet's play. Keats saw in it the warrant for his conviction that truth and beauty are one, and, more surprisingly, recognized the choral and catalytic function of Lear's jester for the stroke of genius it is. Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt also recorded illuminating judgments,

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and many critics since, of many different "schools," have said fine things about it.

The question now most frequently debated is whether the play is Christian and affirmative in spirit, or pagan and pessimistic. No work of art could endure the tugs of such a debate without being somewhat torn. "Pessimistic," like "optimistic," is a small word for a small thing, and *King Lear* is not small. It is sad, as all tragedies are sad. It is religious, as all great tragedies are religious. The exclusion of specific Christian reference, more consistent than in any other Shakespearean play of non-Christian setting, is in harmony with its Old Testament atmosphere (when "Joas reigned in Juda"), but it may reflect nothing more than evasion, in the printed text, of a recent Parliamentary ruling, which in effect labelled *God* in stage speech as blasphemy, *gods* as mere classical allusion. Although the play is rather inclusively than exclusively Christian, which can scarcely be deemed a fault, it shows obvious signs of its genesis in a Christian culture. To cite those involving a single character (other than Cordelia, who has often been viewed as a Christ-symbol), there is Edgar's persistence in returning good for evil, his preachments against the sin of despair, and his reluctance to kill except in trial by combat with its implied religious sanctions. Great questions are asked of the unseen powers — "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" — and these questions remain unanswered, but the silence which follows them should be viewed, here as in other contexts, as the substance of faith. On the human level, the implications of the play are more comforting than the data it abstracts. In our actual world, suffering is not always ennobling, evil not always self-consuming. In every scene where there is pain, there is someone who strives to relieve that pain. At the close, the merciless have all perished; the last sound we hear is the choral voices of the merciful.

The workers of evil are stylized in a way not quite typical of Shakespeare. He could not love these characters

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even as characters, except perhaps Edmund a little. To imitate the dominant animal imagery of the style, Cornwall is less repellent than Goneril and Regan only as the mad bull is less repellent than the hyena, they less repellent than Oswald only as the hyena is less repellent than the jackal. To the latter he failed to give even that engaging touch of the ludicrous he usually reserved for assistant villains. It is useless to speak of their "motivation." Like other aged parents Lear is no gift to good housewifery, and there is something poignantly familiar about such a one's trudging resentfully to the home of a second daughter. "Age is unnecessary." But to see a causal relationship between what he does to Goneril and Regan and what they do to him, or to interpret their aggression as normal revolt against parental domination, is simply to be perverse. The play deals directly, and in both its stories, with one indissoluble bond :

We'll no more meet, no more see one another.  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter....

Eroded, it leaves no human bond secure. To argue that Edmund's conduct is attributable to humiliating illegitimacy, we must supply him with an "unconscious" and invoke its spectral evidence ; there is no sign of sensitivity in his lines. Even that curious product of our times, the liberalism-gone-to-seed which automatically defends anything from treachery to sadism providing it savors of non-conformity, has found little to say for this insatiable quintet.

Shakespeare is not normally associated with hatred, but "a fierce hatred of cruelty and deceitful wickedness" informs *King Lear* – this the opinion of so pure an aesthete as Benedetto Croce. Hazlitt has said, "It is then the best of all Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was most in earnest." A non-sequitur may lurk in this assertion, but we cannot deny its relevance. Our inescapable impression of the play is of its overwhelming sincerity. It

says everything powerfully and everything twice – and always “what we feel, not what we ought to say.” The language varies from the cryptic allusiveness of Lear’s “mad” speeches to the biblical plainness of his pleas for forgiveness ; and though it is often difficult, it is never ambiguous. Lamb has been much taken to task for declaring that “*Lear* is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage,” but more often than not our experiences in the theatre confirm his view. There have been fine productions, but not very many : one touch of insincerity can rot everything away.

Those who now “introduce” this play must wish with Hazlitt, and with much more likelihood of greeting the wish of the reader, that they might resort to silence, since all that can be said will “fall short of the subject, or even what we ourselves conceive of it.” Yet an effort must be made to state its theme, and to the present editor there seems no way of doing this except by focussing the gaze directly and continuously upon Lear himself.

“The King is coming.” These words announce the first entrance of the tragic hero. Let us see him as he is, no pre-conceptions or critical rumors spoiling the innocence of our vision. Nothing about him suggests infirmity or decay. His magnitude and force are far greater than one’s own. He issues commands with the assurance of instinct and lifelong custom. He holds a map in his hands like a Titan holding a kingdom. The kingdom spreads before us in his spacious utterance :

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,  
With shadowy forests and with champains riched,  
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
We make thee lady.

*We make thee lady!* Thus he disposes of a sector of the earth, this ring-giver, this warrior-leader, this chosen one, his only landlord God ! Is it not passing fine . . . ? Here is no soft-brained *Senex*, but the archetypal *King*.

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As such Lear symbolizes Mankind, and we will say nothing essential about him by reckoning up his years and growing glib about the symptoms of senile dementia. The king-figure surrogate is an understandable product of the human mind in its early attempts at abstraction, since the most imposing of single men best lends his image to the difficult concept of Man. His vicissitudes best epitomize the vicissitudes of all, since upon the highest altitude the sun shines brightest and the cold snow lies most deep. Early Renaissance drama was steeped in the tradition of this symbolic figure, sometimes still called *King* as well as *Mankind*, *Everyman*, *Genus Humanum*, and the like. He is always identifiable by his centrality in the action, and the mixed company he keeps – vices or flatterers on the one hand, virtues or truth-speakers on the other. And there stands Lear – Goneril and Regan to the left, Kent and Cordelia to the right.

But this is also a family gathering. There is the father, and there the servants and children of his house. The central figure is, and seems always more so as the play weaves its spell, not only archetypal King, Man, and Father, but particular king, man, and father. No symbol that remained purely symbol could so touch our emotions. To have children of his flesh and blood, the father must be flesh and blood – such as can be old, grow weary, feel cold and wet.

Only a few days of fictional time elapse, only a few hours in the theatre, so that Lear's first words still echo in our ears as we hear his last.

We make thee lady. . . . Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower ! . . . Peace, Kent ! Come not between the dragon and his wrath. . . . The bow is bent and drawn ; make from the shaft. . . . Therefore be gone. . . . Let me not stay a jot for dinner ; go get it ready. . . . Call the clotpoll back.

Such are Lear's accents at the beginning. And at the close –

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You must bear with me. . . . I am old and foolish. . . . Her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low. . . . Pray you undo this button. Thank you, sir.

He has learned a new language. We are required to accept this learning as good, but we are forbidden to rejoice.

The play is Lear's gethsemane, its great reality his suffering, which so draws us into itself that our conception of the work as a whole is formed in the crucible of our fear and pity. His anguish is kin with the anguish of Job, Prometheus, Oedipus, and other tragic projections of spirits in agony, but it retains its own peculiar quality. Its cause, its nature, and its meaning will always remain the imperfectly resolved crux of the play; and one can do no more than explain, with such confidence as one is able to muster, how these things appear to him.

To say that Lear gets what he deserves is to share the opinion of Goneril and Regan. (Some have even implied that Cordelia gets what she deserves, anaesthetizing their heads and hearts with obtuse moralisms suggested by the doctrine of "poetic justice.") What does Lear deserve? He is proud and peremptory, and it is better to be humble and temporizing, but there are occupational hazards in being a king, perhaps even in being a father. Is his charge not true that the world has lied to him, telling him he was wise before he was bearded, returning "yea and nay" to everything he said? His guilt is widely shared, and his "flaw" like that of Oedipus seems mysteriously hereditary. And it is linked inextricably with his virtues. We applaud the resurgence of youthful might that cuts down Cordelia's assassin. We admire the valor of his attempts (and they come quite early) to be patient, to compromise, to hold back womanish tears, to cling to his reason. Nothing is more moving than his bewildered attempts to meet "social" obligations as he kneels by Cordelia's body. We love his *manliness*. Pride has its value too.

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Lear's errors stem from no corruption of heart. His rejection of Kent and Cordelia is the reflex of his attachment to them. The errors are not the man. The man is one who has valued and been valued by such as they. The things he wants – fidelity and love – are good things. That he should find them in his servant and his child seems to him an aspect of universal order. In his vocabulary, as distinct from Edmund's, such things are *natural*. His inability to distinguish between the false and the true, and his craving for visible displays, are not failings peculiar to him. "How much do you love me?" – few parents suppress this bullying question, spoken or unspoken, however much they may have felt its burden as children. It seems in the nature of some things that they always be learned too late, that as children we might have offered more, as parents demanded less. To punish a thankless child has the appearance of justice, to withdraw in one's age from the cares of state the appearance of wisdom, to dispose of one's goods by gift instead of testament the appearance of generosity. Plain men in their prime have been similarly deceived. Gloucester shakes his head sadly over Lear's injustice, folly, and selfishness as he duplicates his actions.

In the maimed but agile mind of the Fool faithfully dogging Lear's steps, his errors stand as an *idée fixe* and are harped upon with terrible iteration. We should not imitate the example. We may find more meaning in the excess of expiation. The purely physical suffering – denial of rest, exposure to wind and rain – is real, but it strikes the sufferer himself as little more than a metaphor. We may say that his spiritual suffering is in excess of his actual afflictions, that it is selfish and centrifugal, or a mere symptom of aged petulance, but if we do so, we are stopping our ears to the voice of Shakespeare and all his decent spokesmen. Lear's curse of Goneril is still alienating, like his treatment of Cordelia, but when he stands weeping before his cormorant daughters in whom he has put his faith, and

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they coolly and relentlessly strip him of every vestige of dignity, our hearts turn over. Humility may be good, but this humiliation is evil.

There is no *need* that this man be attended by a hundred knights, that his messenger be deferentially treated, or that his children offer him more than subsistence. His cause rests upon no more rational grounds than our powers of sympathy and imagination. "O reason not the need." As his every expectation is brutally defeated, and he looks in dazed recognition upon the world as it is instead of what he thought it was, of himself as he is instead of what he thought he was, we defer to his past illusions. He had never identified prestige merely as power, had never imagined that the visages of respect, kindness, and love could contort into the hideous lines of icy contempt and sour indifference.

Lear's anguish now represents for us Man's horror and sense of helplessness at the discovery of evil – the infiltration of animality in the human world, naked cruelty and appetite. It is a fissure that threatens to widen infinitely, and we see Lear at the center of turbulence as it works its breakage in minds, in families, in nations, in the heavens themselves, interacting in dreadful concatenation.

The significance of Lear's response to his discovery is best seen in the light of Gloucester's. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, II, 10, the "storie of the Paphlagonian unkind King and his kinde sonne" repeats in essence the Lear legend, except that the children, false and true, are sons instead of daughters. By reducing the rank of Sidney's king and interweaving his parallel fate in alternate scenes, Shakespeare is able, amazingly, both further to universalize and further to particularize the experience of Lear. Gloucester also represents Man, but his distinction from Lear suggests the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary men. Gloucester is amiably confused about the tawdriness of his past, of which Edmund is the product, and sentimentally fumbling in the present. What appears in Lear as

## INTRODUCTION

heroic error appears in him as gullibility. His fine moments are identical with those of a nameless serf of Cornwall's and an ancient tenant of his own – in the presence of cruelty he becomes kind and brave :

GLOUCESTER I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

REGAN Wherefore to Dover ?

GLOUCESTER Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes.

Like Lear he is incorrupt of heart, and he grows in dignity, but his total response to vicious encroachment is something akin to apathy and surrender ; his instinct is to retreat.

Not so with Lear. He batters himself to pieces against the fact of evil. Granted that its disruptive power has been unleashed by his own error, so that error itself partakes of evil, as he is shudderingly aware, yet he remains the great antagonist. Falsity, cruelty, injustice, corruption – their appalling forms swirl about him in phantasmic patterns. His instinct is to rip them from the universe, to annihilate all things if it is the only way to annihilate these things. His charges of universal hypocrisy : "handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief ?" – his denial of human responsibility : "None does offend, none – I say none !" – his indictment of life itself :

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air  
We wawl and cry –

cancel their own nihilism, because they sound no acquiescence. Lear is the voice of protest. The grandeur of his spirit supplies the impotence of his body as he opposes to evil all that is left him to oppose – his molten indignation, his huge invectives, his capacity for feeling pain.

This quality of Lear seen in retrospect, his hunger after righteousness, gives magnitude to the concluding scenes. His spirit has been doubly lacerated by his own sense of guilt. He has failed "poor naked wretches" no different

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from himself, and he has wronged Cordelia. His remorse has found expression only in brief occasional utterances, welling up as it were against desperate efforts of containment, but its scalding power is revealed in his acts of abasement when he and Cordelia meet. The final episodes are all vitally linked. When the two are led in captive, we are made to look back upon their reunion, which he dreams of endlessly reenacting :

When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down  
And ask of thee forgiveness ;

then forward to their death :

Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,  
The gods themselves throw incense.

The words help to effect that perfect coalescence of particular and general tragic experience achieved as he kneels beside her body. This is a father and his child who will come no more, the father remembering his own unkindness and the child's endearing ways. There is no melioration in his dying delusion that she still lives, no mention of an after-life. It is unspeakably sad. But it merges with a larger yet less devastating sadness. This is also a sacrifice, and although the somber tones of the survivors as they take up the burden of survival give it relevance to the future as well as the past, it is such a sacrifice as obliquely vindicates the gods if upon it they throw incense.

We know, not as an item of faith but of simple demonstrable fact, that we are greatly indebted for such wisdom as we have, that it was bought with "sacrifices." In the struggle of our kind against brutality, the great casualties, spiritual and even physical, have always been among those who have been best and those who have cared most. In the world of this play Cordelia has brought us the truest sense of human goodness, her words "No cause, no cause" the truest sense of moral beauty. She is the perfect offering. And so is Lear. She is best. He cares most for what is

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best. The play ends as it begins in an allegorical grouping, commemorating humanity's long, agonized, and continuing struggle to be human. This larger meaning gives our tears the dignity of an act of ratification and gratitude: to these still figures we have pitied we owe the gift of feeling pity.

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ALFRED HARBAGE

## NOTE ON THE TEXT

In 1608 a version of *King Lear* appeared in a quarto volume sold by Nathaniel Butter at his shop at the Pied Bull. Its text was reproduced in 1619 in a quarto falsely dated 1608. Various theories have been offered to explain the nature of the Pied Bull text, the most recent being that it represents Shakespeare's rough draft carelessly copied, and corrupted by the faulty memories of actors who were party to the copying. In 1623 a greatly improved though "cut" version of the play appeared in the first folio, evidently printed from the quarto after it had been carefully collated with the official playhouse manuscript. The present edition follows the folio text, and although it adds in square brackets the passages appearing only in the quarto, and accepts fifty-three quarto readings, it follows the chosen text more closely than do most recent editions. However, deference to the quarto is paid in an appendix, where its alternative readings, both those accepted and those rejected, are listed. Few editorial emendations have been retained, but see I, ii, 21 *top* (Q & F 'to'), II, ii, 138 *contemnèd'st* (Q 'temnest'), III, vi, 25 *bourn* (Q 'broom'), III, vi, 67 *lym* (Q & F 'him'), IV, ii, 57 *to threat* (Q 'thereat'), IV, iii, 20 *seemed* (Q 'seeme'), 31 *moistened* (Q 'moistened her'). The quarto text is not divided into acts and scenes. The act and scene division here supplied marginally for reference purposes is that of the folio except that Act II, Scene ii of the latter has been subdivided into Scenes ii, iii, and iv. The continuity of the action here, and at several other misleadingly divided sections of the play, is indicated in the manner explained at the end of "The texts of the plays."



# KING LEAR

[NAMES OF THE ACTORS

*Lear, King of Britain*  
*King of France*  
*Duke of Burgundy*  
*Duke of Cornwall*  
*Duke of Albany*  
*Earl of Kent*  
*Earl of Gloucester*  
*Edgar, son to Gloucester*  
*Edmund, bastard son to Gloucester*  
*Curan, a courtier*  
*Old Man, tenant to Gloucester*  
*Doctor*  
*Lear's Fool*  
*Oswald, steward to Goneril*  
*A Captain under Edmund's command*  
*Gentlemen loyal to Lear*  
*A Gentleman attending on Cordelia*  
*A Herald*  
*Servants to Cornwall*  
*Goneril*  
*Regan*  
*Cordelia* } daughters to Lear  
*Knights attending on Lear, Officers,*  
*Messengers, Soldiers, Attendants*

Scene : *Britain*]

# KING LEAR

*Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund.*

I, i

KENT I thought the King had more affected the Duke of 1  
Albany than Cornwall. 2

GLOUCESTER It did always seem so to us ; but now, in the  
division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the  
dukes he values most, for equalities are so weighed that 5  
curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety. 6

KENT Is not this your son, my lord ?

GLOUCESTER His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. 8  
I have so often blushed to acknowledge him that now I  
am brazed to't. 10

KENT I cannot conceive you. 11

GLOUCESTER Sir, this young fellow's mother could ;  
whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had indeed,  
sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her  
her bed. Do you smell a fault ?

KENT I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being  
so proper. 17

GLOUCESTER But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some  
year elder than this who yet is no dearer in my account :  
though this knave came something saucily to the world 19  
20

I, i Room of state within King Lear's palace 1 affected warmly regarded

2 Albany i.e. Scotland (once ruled by 'Albanacte') 5 equalities . . .

weighed i.e. the portions weigh so equally 6 curiosity . . . moiety careful

analysis by neither can make him prefer the other's portion 8 breeding

rearing 10 brazed brazened 11 conceive understand (with pun following)

17 proper handsome 19 account estimation 20 saucily (1) impertinently,

(2) bawdily

22 before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

EDMUND No, my lord.

GLOUCESTER My Lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honorable friend.

EDMUND My services to your lordship.

KENT I must love you, and sue to know you better.

EDMUND Sir, I shall study deserving.

31 GLOUCESTER He hath been out nine years, and away he  
32 shall again.

[Sound a] sennet.

The King is coming.

Enter [one bearing a coronet, then] King Lear, [then  
the Dukes of] Cornwall, [and] Albany, [next]  
Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, and Attendants.

LEAR

Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER

I shall, my lord.

Exit [with Edmund].

LEAR

36 Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.  
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided  
38 In three our kingdom ; and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age,  
Conferring them on younger strengths while we  
Unburdened crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,  
And you our no less loving son of Albany,  
43 We have this hour a constant will to publish  
44 Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife

22 *whoreson* (affectionate abuse, but literally applicable, like *knave* above)

31 *out* away (for training, or in military service) 32 s.d. *sennet* trumpet

flourish (heralding a procession) 36 *darker purpose* more secret intention

(to require declarations of affection) 38 *fast* firm 43 *constant . . . publish*

fixed intention to announce 44 *several* individual

May be prevented now. The princes, France and  
Burgundy,

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love;  
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,  
And here are to be answered. Tell me, my daughters  
(Since now we will divest us both of rule,  
Interest of territory, cares of state),  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most,  
That we our largest bounty may extend  
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,  
Our eldest-born, speak first.

47

50

53

## GONERIL

Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter;  
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;  
Beyond what can be valuèd, rich or rare;  
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;  
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;  
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable.  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

55

56

60

CORDELIA *[aside]*

What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent.

## LEAR

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,  
With shadowy forests and with champains riched,  
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issues  
Be this perpetual. – What says our second daughter,  
Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall?

64

65

66

67

## REGAN

I am made of that self mettle as my sister,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart

70

47 *amorous sojourn* i.e. visit of courtship 50 *Interest* legal possession 53  
*nature . . . challenge* natural affection matches other merits 55 *wield*  
*handle* 56 *space* scope (for the exercise of *liberty*) 60 *breath* voice;  
*unable* inadequate 64 *champains riched* plains enriched 65 *wide-skirted*  
*far spreading* 66 *issues* descendants 67 *perpetual* in perpetuity 70  
*prize . . . worth* value me at her value

71 I find she names my very deed of love ;  
 Only she comes too short, that I profess  
 Myself an enemy to all other joys  
 74 Which the most precious square of sense possesses,  
 75 And find I am alone felicitate  
 In your dear Highness' love.

**CORDELIA** [aside] Then poor Cordelia ;  
 And yet not so, since I am sure my love 's  
 78 More ponderous than my tongue.

**LEAR**

To thee and thine hereditary ever  
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,  
 81 No less in space, validity, and pleasure  
 Than that conferred on Goneril. — Now, our joy,  
 83 Although our last and least ; to whose young love  
 84 The vines of France and milk of Burgundy  
 85 Strive to be interest ; what can you say to draw  
 A third more opulent than your sisters ? Speak.

**CORDELIA**

Nothing, my lord.

**LEAR** Nothing ?

**CORDELIA** Nothing.

**LEAR**

Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

**CORDELIA**

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
 My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty  
 93 According to my bond, no more nor less.

**LEAR**

How, how, Cordelia ? Mend your speech a little,  
 Lest you may mar your fortunes.

71 *my very deed of the true fact of my* 74 *Which . . . possesses* which the  
 most precise measurement by the senses holds to be most precious 75  
*felicitate* made happy 78 *ponderous* weighty 81 *validity* value; pleasure  
 pleasing qualities 83 *least* smallest, youngest 84 *vines* vineyards; *milk*  
 pasture-lands (?) 85 *interest* concerned as interested parties 93 *bond*  
 obligation

CORDELIA

Good my lord,

You have begot me, bred me, loved me. I  
 Return those duties back as are right fit,  
 Obey you, love you, and most honor you. 97  
 Why have my sisters husbands if they say  
 They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,  
 That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry  
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty. 101  
 Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,  
 [To love my father all.]

LEAR

But goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA

Ay, my good lord.

LEAR

So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA

So young, my lord, and true.

LEAR

Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower!

For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,

The mysteries of Hecate and the night, 110By all the operation of the orbs 111

From whom we do exist and cease to be,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

Propinquity and property of blood, 114

And as a stranger to my heart and me

Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian, 116Or he that makes his generation messes 117

To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom

Be as well neighbored, pitied, and relieved,

As thou my sometime daughter. 120

KENT

Good my liege —

97 *Return . . . fit* i.e. am fittingly dutiful in return 101 *plight* pledge, troth-plight 110 *Hecate* infernal goddess, patroness of witches 111 *operation . . . orbs* astrological influences 114 *Propinquity* relationship; *property* i.e. common property, something shared 116 *Scythian* (proverbially barbarous) 117 *makes . . . messes* makes meals of his offspring 120 *sometime* former

## LEAR

Peace, Kent!

122 Come not between the dragon and his wrath.  
 123 I loved her most, and thought to set my rest  
 124 On her kind nursery. — Hence and avoid my sight! —  
 125 So be my grave my peace as here I give  
 Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs!  
 Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,  
 With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;  
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.  
 I do invest you jointly with my power,  
 131 Preeminence, and all the large effects  
 132 That troop with majesty. Ourselves, by monthly course,  
 With reservation of an hundred knights,  
 By you to be sustained, shall our abode  
 Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain  
 136 The name, and all th' addition to a king. The sway,  
 Revenue, execution of the rest,  
 Belovèd sons, be yours; which to confirm,  
 139 This coronet part between you.

## KENT

Royal Lear,

Whom I have ever honored as my king,  
 Loved as my father, as my master followed,  
 As my great patron thought on in my prayers —

## LEAR

143 The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.

## KENT

144 Let it fall rather, though the fork invade  
 The region of my heart. Be Kent unmannerly  
 When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?  
 Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak

122 *his* its 123 *set my rest* (1) risk my stake (a term in the card game *primero*), (2) rely for my repose 124 *nursery* nursing, care 125 *So . . . peace as* let me rest peacefully in my grave only as 131 *effects* tokens 132 *Ourselves* I (royal plural) 136 *th' addition* honors and prerogatives 139 *coronet* (symbol of rule; not necessarily the royal crown) 143 *make* make away 144 *fall* strike; *fork* two-pronged head

When power to flattery bows? To plainness honor 's bound	
When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state,	149
And in thy best consideration check	150
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment,	151
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,	
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds	
Reverb no hollowness.	154
LEAR	Kent, on thy life, no more!
KENT	
My life I never held but as a pawn	155
To wage against thine enemies ; ne'er fear to lose it,	156
Thy safety being motive.	157
LEAR	Out of my sight!
KENT	
See better, Lear, and let me still remain	158
The true blank of thine eye.	159
LEAR	
Now by Apollo -	
KENT	Now by Apollo, King,
	Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.
LEAR	O vassal! Miscreant!
	<i>[Grasping his sword.]</i>
ALBANY, CORNWALL	Dear sir, forbear!
KENT	
Kill thy physician, and thy fee bestow	
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift,	
Or, whilst I can vent clamor from my throat,	
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.	
LEAR	Hear me, recreant,
	On thine allegiance, hear me!

149 *Reserve thy state* retain your kingly authority 150 *best consideration* most careful deliberation 151 *Answer my life* i.e. I'll stake my life on 154 *Reverb no hollowness* i.e. do not reverberate (like a drum) as a result of hollowness 155 *pawn* stake 156 *wage* wager, pit 157 *motive* the moving cause 158 *still* always 159 *blank* center of the target (to guide your aim truly) 161 *Miscreant* (1) rascal, (2) infidel 166 *recreant* traitor

168 That thou hast sought to make us break our vows,  
 169 Which we durst never yet, and with strained pride  
 170 To come betwixt our sentence and our power,  
 Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,  
 172 Our potency made good, take thy reward.  
 Five days we do allot thee for provision  
 174 To shield thee from disasters of the world,  
 And on the sixth to turn thy hated back  
 Upon our kingdom. If, on the tenth day following,  
 177 Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions,  
 The moment is thy death. Away. By Jupiter,  
 This shall not be revoked.

KENT

180 Fare thee well, King. Sith thus thou wilt appear,  
 Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

*[To Cordelia]*

The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,  
 That justly think'st and hast most rightly said.

*[To Regan and Goneril]*

184 And your large speeches may your deeds approve,  
 185 That good effects may spring from words of love.  
 Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu ;  
 187 He'll shape his old course in a country new.

Exit.

*Flourish. Enter Gloucester, with France and  
 Burgundy ; Attendants.*

GLOUCESTER

Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

LEAR

My Lord of Burgundy,  
 We first address toward you, who with this king  
 Hath rivalled for our daughter. What in the least

168 *That in that, since 169 strained excessive 170 To come . . . power*  
 i.e. to oppose my power to sentence 172 *Our . . . good* if my power is to  
 be demonstrated as real 174 *disasters accidents* 177 *trunk body* 180  
*Sith* since 184 *approve* confirm 185 *effects consequences* 187 *shape*  
 . . . *course* keep to his customary ways (of honesty)

Will you require in present dower with her,  
Or cease your quest of love?

LEAR Right noble Burgundy,  
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so ;  
But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands.  
If aught within that little seeming substance,  
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced  
And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,  
She's there, and she is yours.

**BURGUNDY** I know no answer.

LEAR

Will you, with those infirmities she owes, 202  
Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,  
Dow'red with our curse, and strangered with our oath, 204  
Take her, or leave her ?

**BURGUNDY** Pardon me, royal sir.  
Election makes not up on such conditions.

LEAR  
Then leave her, sir, for by the pow'r that made me  
I tell you all her wealth. [to France] For you, great King,  
I would not from your love make such a stray  
To match you where I hate ; therefore beseech you  
T' avert your liking a more worthier way  
Than on a wretch whom Nature is ashamed  
Almost t' acknowledge hers. 209  
211

FRANCE This is most strange,  
That she whom even but now was your best object,  
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,  
The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time 214  
215

198 seeming substance i.e. nothing, mere shell 199 pieced joined 202 owes  
owns 204 strangered with made alien by 206 Election . . . conditions no  
choice is possible on such terms 209 make . . . stray stray so far as 211  
avert turn 214 best favorite 215 argument theme

217 Commit a thing so monstrous to dismantle  
 So many folds of favor. Sure her offense  
 Must be of such unnatural degree  
 220 That monsters it, or your fore-vouched affection  
 221 Fall'n into taint ; which to believe of her  
 222 Must be a faith that reason without miracle  
 Should never plant in me.

**CORDELIA** I yet beseech your Majesty,  
 If for I want that glib and oily art  
 225 To speak and purpose not since what I well intend  
 I'll do't before I speak, that you make known  
 It is no vicious blot, murder or foulness,  
 No unchaste action or dishonorèd step,  
 That hath deprived me of your grace and favor ;  
 But even for want of that for which I am richer –  
 231 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue  
 That I am glad I have not, though not to have it  
 Hath lost me in your liking.

**LEAR** Better thou  
 Hadst not been born than not t' have pleased me better.

**FRANCE**

235 Is it but this ? A tardiness in nature  
 236 Which often leaves the history unspoke  
 That it intends to do. My Lord of Burgundy,  
 What say you to the lady ? Love 's not love  
 239 When it is mingled with regards that stands  
 Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her ?  
 She is herself a dowry.

**217** to dismantle so to strip off **220** That monsters it as makes it monstrous (i.e. abnormal, freakish); fore-vouched previously sworn **221** taint decay (with the implication that the affection, and the oath attesting it, were tainted in the first place) **222** reason . . . miracle i.e. rational, unaided by miraculous, means of persuasion **225** purpose not i.e. without intending to act in accordance with my words **231** still-soliciting always-begging **235** tardiness in nature natural reticence **236** history unspoke actions unannounced **239-40** mingled . . . point i.e. mixed with irrelevant considerations

**BURGUNDY**

Royal King,

Give but that portion which yourself proposed,  
 And here I take Cordelia by the hand,  
 Duchess of Burgundy.

**LEAR**

Nothing. I have sworn. I am firm.

**BURGUNDY**

I am sorry then you have so lost a father  
 That you must lose a husband.

**CORDELIA**

Peace be with Burgundy.

Since that respects of fortune are his love,  
 I shall not be his wife.

248

**FRANCE**

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poor,  
 Most choice forsaken, and most loved despised,  
 Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.  
 Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.

Gods, gods ! 'Tis strange that from their cold'st neglect  
 My love should kindle to inflamed respect.

255

Thy dow'rless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,  
 Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.

Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy

258

Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.

259

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind.

Thou losest here, a better where to find.

261

**LEAR**

Thou hast her, France ; let her be thine, for we  
 Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see  
 That face of hers again. Therefore be gone  
 Without our grace, our love, our benison.  
 Come, noble Burgundy.

265

*Flourish. Exeunt [Lear, Burgundy, Cornwall,  
 Albany, Gloucester, and Attendants].*

248 respects considerations 255 inflamed respect ardent regard 258  
 wat'rish (1) watery, weak, (2) watered, diluted 259 unprized unvalued  
 261 here this place; where other place 265 benison blessing

FRANCE

Bid farewell to your sisters.

CORDELIA

268 The jewels of our father, with washed eyes  
 Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are ;  
 270 And, like a sister, am most loath to call  
 271 Your faults as they are named. Love well our father.  
 272 To your professèd bosoms I commit him ;  
 But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,  
 274 I would prefer him to a better place.  
 So farewell to you both.

REGAN

Prescribe not us our duty.

GONERIL

Let your study

Be to content your lord, who hath received you  
 278 At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,  
 279 And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

CORDELIA

280 Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides,  
 281 Who covers faults, at last with shame derides.  
 Well may you prosper.

FRANCE

Come, my fair Cordelia.

Exit France and Cordelia.

GONERIL Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most  
 nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will  
 hence to-night.

REGAN That's most certain, and with you ; next month  
 with us.

GONERIL You see how full of changes his age is. The ob-  
 servation we have made of it hath not been little. He

268 *jewels* i.e. things held precious (cf. l. 259); *washed* tear-washed 270  
*like a sister* i.e. with sisterly loyalty 271 *as . . . named* by their true names  
 272 *professèd* i.e. love-professing 274 *prefer* promote 278 *alms* small  
 offerings 279 *worth . . . wanted* i.e. deserving no affection since you have  
 shown no affection 280 *plighted* pleated, enfolded 281 *Who . . . derides*  
 i.e. time at first conceals faults, then exposes them to shame

always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly. 291

REGAN 'Tis the infirmity of his age ; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself. 293

GONERIL The best and soundest of his time hath been but 294  
rash ; then must we look from his age to receive not alone  
the imperfections of long-ingraffed condition, but there- 296  
withal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric  
years bring with them.

REGAN Such unconstant starts are we like to have from 299  
him as this of Kent's banishment.

GONERIL There is further compliment of leave-taking 301  
between France and him. Pray you let us hit together ; if 302  
our father carry authority with such disposition as he  
bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us. 304

REGAN We shall further think of it.

GONERIL We must do something, and i' th' heat. *Exeunt.* 306

■

*Enter Bastard [Edmund, solus, with a letter].*

EDMUND

Thou, Nature, art my goddess ; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines

291 *grossly crudely conspicuous* 293 *known himself* i.e. been aware of what he truly is 294 *of his time* period of his past life 296 *long-ingraffed in-grown, chronic*; *therewithal* along with that 299 *unconstant starts* impulsive moves 301 *compliment* formality 302 *hit agree* 304 *surrender* i.e. yielding up of authority; *offend* harm 306 *i' th' heat* i.e. while the iron is hot I, ii Within the Earl of Gloucester's castle 1 *Nature* i.e. the material and mechanistic as distinct from the spiritual and heaven-ordained 3 *Stand . . . custom* submit to the affliction of convention 4 *curiosity* nice distinctions 5 *For that because; moonshines* months

6 Lag of a brother ? Why bastard ? Wherefore base,  
 7 When my dimensions are as well compact,  
 8 My mind as generous, and my shape as true,  
 9 As honest madam's issue ? Why brand they us  
   With base ? with baseness ? Bastardy base ? Base ?  
 11 Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
 12 More composition and fierce quality  
   Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
 14 Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops  
 15 Got 'tween asleep and wake ? Well then,  
   Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.  
   Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
   As to th' legitimate. Fine word, 'legitimate.'  
   Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,  
 20 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
   Shall top th' legitimate. I grow, I prosper.  
   Now, gods, stand up for bastards.

*Enter Gloucester.*

**GLoucester**

Kent banished thus ? and France in choler parted ?  
 24 And the King gone to-night ? prescribed his pow'r ?  
 25 Confined to exhibition ? All this done  
 26 Upon the gad ? – Edmund, how now ? What news ?

**EDMUND**

So please your lordship, none.

**GLoucester**

28 Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter ?

**EDMUND**

I know no news, my lord.

**GLoucester**

What paper were you reading ?

**EDMUND** Nothing, my lord.

6 *Lag of* behind (in age) 7 *compact* fitted, matched 8 *generous* befitting the  
 high-born 9 *honest* chaste 11 *lusty* . . . *nature* secrecy of natural lust 12  
*composition* completeness of constitution, robustness; *fierce* mettlesome,  
 thoroughbred 14 *fops* fools 15 *Got* begotten 20 *invention* thrive plot  
 succeed 24 *prescribed* limited 25 *exhibition* an allowance, a pension  
 26 *gad* spur 28 *put up* put away

GLOUCESTER No? What needed then that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see. Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

EDMUND I beseech you, sir, pardon me. It is a letter from my brother that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'erlooking.

38

GLOUCESTER Give me the letter, sir.

EDMUND I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

41

GLOUCESTER Let's see, let's see.

EDMUND I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

44

GLOUCESTER (*reads*) 'This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother,

45

46

48

49

50

52

Edgar.'

Hum! Conspiracy? 'Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue.' My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? A heart and brain to breed it in? When came you to this? Who brought it?

57

EDMUND It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it. I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

59

60

GLOUCESTER You know the character to be your brother's?

61

38 o'erlooking examination 41 to blame blameworthy 44 essay trial; taste test 45 policy and reverence policy of reverencing 46 the best of our times our best years 48 idle, fond foolish (synonyms) 49 who sways which rules 50 suffered allowed 52 revenue income 57 to this upon this 59 casement window 60 closet room 61 character handwriting

62 EDMUND If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear  
 63 it were his ; but in respect of that, I would fain think it  
 were not.

GLOUCESTER It is his.

EDMUND It is his hand, my lord ; but I hope his heart is  
 not in the contents.

68 GLOUCESTER Has he never before sounded you in this  
 business ?

EDMUND Never, my lord. But I have heard him oft main-  
 71 tain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age, and fathers  
 declined, the father should be as ward to the son, and  
 the son manage his revenue.

GLOUCESTER O villain, villain ! His very opinion in the  
 letter. Abhorred villain, unnatural, detested, brutish  
 76 villain ; worse than brutish ! Go, sirrah, seek him. I'll  
 apprehend him. Abominable villain ! Where is he ?

EDMUND I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please  
 you to suspend your indignation against my brother till  
 you can derive from him better testimony of his intent,  
 81 you should run a certain course ; where, if you violently  
 proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would  
 make a great gap in your own honor and shake in pieces  
 the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for  
 85 him that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your  
 86 honor, and to no other pretense of danger.

GLOUCESTER Think you so ?

88 EDMUND If your honor judge it meet, I will place you  
 89 where you shall hear us confer of this and by an auri-  
 cular assurance have your satisfaction, and that without  
 any further delay than this very evening.

GLOUCESTER He cannot be such a monster.

62 *matter contents* 63 *in respect of that* i.e. considering what those contents  
 are; *fain* prefer to 68 *sounded you* sounded you out 71 *perfect age* prime  
 of life 76 *sirrah* sir (familiar, or contemptuous, form) 81 *run . . . course*  
 i.e. know where you are going 85 *feel feel out, test; affection* attachment,  
 loyalty 86 *pretense of danger* dangerous intention 88 *judge it meet*  
 consider it fitting 89-90 *by . . . assurance* i.e. by the proof of your own ears

[EDMUND Nor is not, sure.

GLOUCESTER To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth!] Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you; frame the business after 96 your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be in a due 97 resolution.

EDMUND I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the busi- 99 ness as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal. 100

GLOUCESTER These late eclipses in the sun and moon 101 portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can 102 reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by 103 the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, 104 brothers divide. In cities, mutinies; in countries, dis- 105 cord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the pre- 107 diction, there's son against father; the King falls from bias of nature, there's father against child. We have seen 109 the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treach- 112 ery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted 112 Kent banished; his offense, honesty. 'Tis strange. *Exit.*

EDMUND This is the excellent foppery of the world, that 115 when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own 116 behavior, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers 119 by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adul- 120

96 *wind me worm*; *frame plan* 97-98 *unstate . . . resolution* i.e. give everything to know for certain 99 *presently* at once; *convey conduct* 100 *withal* therewith 101 *late* recent 102 *wisdom of nature* natural lore, science 102-04 *can . . . effects* i.e. can supply explanations, yet punitive upheavals in nature (such as earthquakes) follow 103 *scourged* whipped 104 *sequent* following 105 *mutinies* rebellions 107 *comes . . . prediction* i.e. is included among these ill-omened things 109 *bias of nature* natural tendency 112-13 *lose thee nothing* i.e. you will not lose by it 115 *foppery* foolishness 116 *we are sick . . . surfeits* i.e. our fortunes grow sickly, often from the excesses 119 *treachers* traitors 120 *spherical predominance* i.e. ascendancy, or rule, of a particular sphere

terers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence ; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star. My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut ! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar –

*Enter Edgar.*

130 and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy.  
131 My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'  
Bedlam. – O, these eclipses do portend these divisions.  
Fa, sol, la, mi.

EDGAR How now, brother Edmund ; what serious contemplation are you in ?

EDMUND I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

EDGAR Do you busy yourself with that ?

139 EDMUND I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed  
140 unhappily : [as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent ; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities ; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions  
143 against king and nobles ; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches,  
144 and I know not what.]

146 EDGAR How long have you been a sectary astronomical ?

EDMUND Come, come,] when saw you my father last ?

EDGAR The night gone by.

123 *goatish* lecherous 124 *compounded* (1) came to terms, (2) created  
125, 126 *Dragon's Tail, Ursa Major* (constellations, cited because of the suggestiveness of their names) 126 *nativity* birthday 130 *catastrophe* conclusion 131–32 *Tom o' Bedlam* (a type of beggar, mad or pretending to be, so named from the London madhouse, Bethlehem or 'Bedlam' Hospital) 139–40 *succeed unhappily* unluckily follow 140 *unnaturalness* unkindness, enmity 143 *diffidences* instances of distrust 144 *dissipation of cohorts* melting away of supporters 146 *sectary astronomical* of the astrological sect

EDMUND Spake you with him ?

EDGAR Ay, two hours together.

EDMUND Parted you in good terms ? Found you no displeasure in him by word nor countenance ?

152

EDGAR None at all.

EDMUND Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him ; and at my entreaty forbear his presence until some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

156

157

158

EDGAR Some villain hath done me wrong.

EDMUND That's my fear. I pray you have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower ; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak. Pray ye, go ; there's my key. If you do stir abroad, go armed.

160

161

162

EDGAR Armed, brother ?

EDMUND Brother, I advise you to the best. Go armed. I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you. I have told you what I have seen and heard ; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it. Pray you, away.

169

EDGAR Shall I hear from you anon ?

170

EDMUND I do serve you in this business. *Exit [Edgar].*

A credulous father, and a brother noble,

Whose nature is so far from doing harms

That he suspects none ; on whose foolish honesty

My practices ride easy. I see the business.

175

Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit ;

176

All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

*Exit.* 177

\*

152 countenance expression, look 156 qualified moderated 157 mischief injury 158 allay be appeased 160 continent forbearance cautious inaccessibility 163 fitly conveniently 169 image and horror horrible true picture 170 anon soon 175 practices plots 176 wit intelligence 177 meet proper, acceptable; fashion fit i.e. rig up, shape to the purpose

KING LEAR

I, iii      *Enter Goneril and Steward [Oswald].*

GONERIL

Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his  
fool?

OSWALD Ay, madam.

GONERIL

By day and night he wrongs me. Every hour  
4 He flashes into one gross crime or other  
That sets us all at odds. I'll not endure it.  
6 His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us  
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,  
I will not speak with him. Say I am sick.  
9 If you come slack of former services,  
10 You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

*[Horns within.]*

OSWALD He's coming, madam; I hear him.

GONERIL

Put on what weary negligence you please,  
13 You and your fellows. I'd have it come to question.  
14 If he distaste it, let him to my sister,  
Whose mind and mine I know in that are one,  
16 [Not to be overruled. Idle old man,  
That still would manage those authorities  
That he hath given away. Now, by my life,  
Old fools are babes again, and must be used  
20 With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abused.]  
Remember what I have said.

OSWALD

Well, madam.

GONERIL

And let his knights have colder looks among you.  
What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so.

I, iii Within the Duke of Albany's palace 4 *crime* offense 6 *riotous*  
boisterous 9 *come . . . services* i.e. serve him less well than formerly  
10 *answer* answer for 13 *question* i.e. open issue, a thing discussed  
14 *distaste* dislike 16 *Idle* foolish 20 *checks . . . abused* restraints in  
place of cajolery when they (the old men) are seen to be deceived (about  
their true state)

[I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,  
That I may speak.] I'll write straight to my sister  
To hold my course. Prepare for dinner.

*Exeunt.*

24

*Enter Kent [disguised].*

I, iv

KENT

If but as well I other accents borrow  
That can my speech defuse, my good intent  
May carry through itself to that full issue  
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banished Kent,  
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned,  
So may it come thy master whom thou lov'st  
Shall find thee full of labors.

2

3

4

*Horns within. Enter Lear, [Knight,] and Attendants.*

LEAR Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready. 8  
[Exit an Attendant.] How now, what art thou?

KENT A man, sir.

LEAR What dost thou profess? What wouldest thou with 11  
us?

KENT I do profess to be no less than I seem, to serve him 12  
truly that will put me in trust, to love him that is honest,  
to converse with him that is wise and says little, to fear 14  
judgment, to fight when I cannot choose, and to eat no 15  
fish.

LEAR What art thou?

KENT A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the  
King.

LEAR If thou be'st as poor for a subject as he's for a king,  
thou art poor enough. What wouldest thou?

KENT Service.

LEAR Who wouldest thou serve?

KENT You.

LEAR Dost thou know me, fellow?

24-25 *breed . . . speak* i.e. make an issue of it so that I may speak

I, iv 2 *defuse* disorder, *disguise* 3 *full issue* perfect result 4 *razed*  
*my likeness* erased my natural appearance 8 *stay* wait 11 *profess* do,  
work at (with pun following) 12 *profess* claim 14 *converse* associate  
15 *judgment* i.e. God's judgment 15-16 *eat no fish* be a Protestant (ana-  
chronism) (?), avoid unmanly diet (?)

KENT No, sir, but you have that in your countenance  
 27 which I would fain call master.

LEAR What's that?

KENT Authority.

LEAR What services canst thou do?

31 KENT I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious  
 tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly.  
 That which ordinary men are fit for I am qualified in,  
 and the best of me is diligence.

LEAR How old art thou?

KENT Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor  
 so old to dote on her for anything. I have years on my  
 back forty-eight.

41 LEAR Follow me; thou shalt serve me. If I like thee no  
 worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner,  
 ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you and  
 call my fool hither. [Exit an Attendant.]

*Enter Steward [Oswald].*

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

OSWALD So please you—

*Exit.*

45 LEAR What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.  
*[Exit Knight.]* Where's my fool? Ho, I think the world's  
 asleep. *[Enter Knight.]* How now? Where's that  
 mongrel?

KNIGHT He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

LEAR Why came not the slave back to me when I called  
 him?

KNIGHT Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he  
 would not.

LEAR He would not?

KNIGHT My lord, I know not what the matter is; but to  
 56 my judgment your Highness is not entertained with  
 that ceremonious affection as you were wont. There's a

*27 fain* like to *31 keep honest counsel* keep counsel honestly, i.e. respect confidences; *curious* elaborate, embroidered (as contrasted with *plain*) *41 knave boy* *45 clotpoll* clodpoll, dolt *56 entertained* rendered hospitality

great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the Duke himself also and your daughter.

LEAR Ha? Say'st thou so?

KNIGHT I beseech you pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your Highness wronged.

LEAR Thou but rememb'rest me of mine own conception. 64  
I have perceived a most faint neglect of late, which I have 65  
rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a 66  
very pretense and purpose of unkindness. I will look 67  
further into't. But where's my fool? I have not seen  
him this two days.

KNIGHT Since my young lady's going into France, sir,  
the fool hath much pined away.

LEAR No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you and  
tell my daughter I would speak with her. [Exit Knight.]  
Go you, call hither my fool. [Exit an Attendant.]

Enter Steward [Oswald].

O, you, sir, you! Come you hither, sir. Who am I, sir?

OSWALD My lady's father.

LEAR 'My lady's father'? My lord's knave, you whoreson  
dog, you slave, you cur!

OSWALD I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your  
pardon.

LEAR Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal? 80  
[Strikes him.]

OSWALD I'll not be stricken, my lord. 81

KENT Nor tripped neither, you base football player. 82  
[Trips up his heels.]

LEAR I thank thee, fellow. Thou serv'st me, and I'll love  
thee.

64 rememb'rest remind 65 faint neglect i.e. the weary negligence of I, iii, 12

66 jealous curiosity i.e. suspicious concern about trifles 67 very pretense true

intention 80 bandy volley, exchange 81 stricken struck 82 football (an

impromptu street and field game, held in low esteem)

85 KENT Come, sir, arise, away. I'll teach you differences.  
 Away, away. If you will measure your lubber's length  
 87 again, tarry ; but away. Go to ! Have you wisdom ? So.

[Pushes him out.]

88 LEAR Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee. There's earnest of thy service.

[Gives money.] Enter Fool.

90 FOOL Let me hire him too. Here's my coxcomb.  
 [Offers Kent his cap.]

LEAR How now, my pretty knave ? How dost thou ?

FOOL Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

KENT Why, fool ?

FOOL Why ? For taking one's part that's out of favor. Nay,  
 95 an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'l catch  
 cold shortly. There, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow  
 97 has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a  
 blessing against his will. If thou follow him, thou must  
 99 needs wear my coxcomb. – How now, nuncle ? Would I  
 had two coxcombs and two daughters.

LEAR Why, my boy ?

FOOL If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs  
 myself. There's mine ; beg another of thy daughters.

LEAR Take heed, sirrah – the whip.

FOOL Truth 's a dog must to kennel ; he must be whipped  
 106 out, when the Lady Brach may stand by th' fire and  
 stink.

108 LEAR A pestilent gall to me.

FOOL Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

LEAR Do.

FOOL Mark it, nuncle.

Have more than thou shovest,  
 Speak less than thou knowest,

85 *differences* distinctions in rank 87 *Go to ! . . . wisdom* i.e. Get along ! Do you know what's good for you ? 88 *earnest* part payment 90 *coxcomb* (cap of the professional fool, topped with an imitation comb) 95 *smile . . . sits* i.e. adapt yourself to prevailing forces 97 *banished* i.e. provided the means for them to become alien to him 99 *nuncle* mine uncle 106 *Brach* hound bitch 108 *gall* sore, source of irritation

Lend less than thou owest, 114  
 Ride more than thou goest, 115  
 Learn more than thou trowest, 116  
 Set less than thou throwest ; 117  
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,  
 And keep in-a-door,  
 And thou shalt have more 120  
 Than two tens to a score.

**KENT** This is nothing, fool.

**FOOL** Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer – you 123  
gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing,  
nuncle?

**LEAR** Why, no, boy. Nothing can be made out of nothing.

**FOOL** [to Kent] Prithee tell him, so much the rent of his 127  
land comes to ; he will not believe a fool.

**LEAR** A bitter fool.

**FOOL** Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a  
bitter fool and a sweet one ? 131

**LEAR** No, lad ; teach me.

**FOOL** [That lord that counselled thee  
To give away thy land,  
Come place him here by me –  
Do thou for him stand. 136  
The sweet and bitter fool  
Will presently appear ;  
The one in motley here,  
The other found out there. 140

**LEAR** Dost thou call me fool, boy ?

**FOOL** All thy other titles thou hast given away ; that thou  
wast born with.

114 *owest* borrow (?), own, keep (?) 115 *goest* walk 116 *Learn* hear,  
listen to; *trowest* believe 117 *Set . . . throwest* stake less than you throw for  
(i.e. play for odds) 120-21 *have . . . score* i.e. do better than break even  
123 *breath* voice, counsel (reliable only when paid for) 127-28 *rent . . .*  
*land* (nothing, since he has no land) 131 *bitter, sweet* satirical, non-satirical  
136 *Do . . . stand* (the Fool thus identifying Lear as his own foolish  
counsellor) 140 *found out* revealed (since Lear is the *born* fool as distinct  
from himself, the fool in *motley*, professionally satirical)

KENT This is not altogether fool, my lord.

145 FOOL No, faith ; lords and great men will not let me. If I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't. And ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself ; they'll be snatching.] Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns.

LEAR What two crowns shall they be ?

FOOL Why, after I have cut the egg i' th' middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' th' middle and gav'st away both parts, thou bor'st thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt. Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gav'st thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

154 156 157 158 [Sings] Fools had ne'er less grace in a year,  
159 160 For wise men are grown foppish,  
And know not how their wits to wear,  
Their manners are so apish.

LEAR When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah ?

163 FOOL I have used it, nuncle, e'er since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers ; for when thou gav'st them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

[Sings] Then they for sudden joy did weep,  
And I for sorrow sung,  
168 That such a king should play bo-peep  
And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie. I would fain learn to lie.

172 LEAR An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

FOOL I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are.

145 *let me* (i.e. be all fool, since they seek a share of folly) 148 *snatching* (like greedy courtiers seeking shares in royal patents of monopoly) 154 *bor'st . . . dirt* (thus foolishly reversing normal behavior) 156 *like myself* i.e. like a fool 157 *let . . . so* i.e. let him be whipped (as a fool) who mistakes this truth as my typical folly 158 *grace . . . year* favor at any time 159 *foppish* foolish 160 *their wits to wear* i.e. to use their intelligence 163 *used* practiced 168 *play bo-beep* i.e. act like a child 172 *An if*

They'll have me whipped for speaking true ; thou'lt have me whipped for lying ; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool, and yet I would not be thee, nuncle : thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left nothing i' th' middle. 178  
Here comes one o' the parings.

*Enter Goneril.*

LEAR How now, daughter ? What makes that frontlet on ? 180  
You are too much of late i' th' frown.

FOOL Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning. Now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now : I am a fool, thou art nothing. [to Goneril] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue. So your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,  
Weary of all, shall want some.—

188  
189

[*Points at Lear.*]

That's a shealed peascod.

190

GONERIL

Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,  
But other of your insolent retinue  
Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth  
In rank and not-to-be-endurèd riots. Sir,  
I had thought by making this well known unto you  
To have found a safe redress, but now grow fearful,  
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,  
That you protect this course, and put it on  
By your allowance ; which if you should, the fault  
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,  
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,

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200  
201

178 *pared . . . middle* i.e. completely disposed of your wits (in disposing of your power) 180 *frontlet* band worn across the brow; hence, frown 183-84 *O . . . figure* cipher without a digit to give it value 188 *crum* soft bread within the crust 189 *want need* 190 *shealed* shelled, empty; *peascod* pea-pod 191 *all-licensed* all privileged 193 *carp* complain 196 *safe sure* 198 *put it on* instigate it 199 *allowance approval* 200 *redresses sleep* correction lie dormant 201 *tender of care for; weal state*

202      Might in their working do you that offense,  
 Which else were shame, that then necessity  
 Will call discreet proceeding.

FOOL For you know, nuncle,

206      The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long  
 207      That it's had it head bit off by it young.

208      So out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

LEAR Are you our daughter?

GONERIL

I would you would make use of your good wisdom  
 211 (Whereof I know you are fraught) and put away  
 212 These dispositions which of late transport you  
 From what you rightly are.

FOOL May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?

215      Whoop, Jug, I love thee!

LEAR

Does any here know me? This is not Lear.  
 Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?  
 218      Either his notion weakens, his discernings  
 219      Are lethargied – Ha! Waking? 'Tis not so.  
 Who is it that can tell me who I am?

FOOL Lear's shadow.

[LEAR

222      I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty,  
 Knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded  
 I had daughters.

FOOL Which they will make an obedient father.]

LEAR Your name, fair gentlewoman?

**202-04** *Might . . . proceeding* in their operation might be considered humiliating to you but, under the circumstances, are merely prudent  
**206** *cuckoo* (an image suggesting illegitimacy as well as voraciousness, since the cuckoo lays its eggs in the nests of other birds) **207** *it* its **208** *darkling* in the dark (like the dead hedge-sparrow and the threatened Lear) **211** *fraught* freighted, laden **212** *dispositions* moods **215** *Jug* Joan (evidently part of some catch-phrase) **218** *notion* understanding **219** *Ha! Waking* i.e. so I am really awake (presumably accompanied by the 'business' of pinching himself) **222** *marks of sovereignty* evidences that I am King (and hence the father of the princesses)

## GONERIL

This admiration, sir, is much o' th' savor 227  
 Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you  
 To understand my purposes aright.  
 As you are old and reverend, should be wise.  
 Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires, 232  
 Men so disordered, so deboshed and bold  
 That this our court, infected with their manners,  
 Shows like a riotous inn. Epicurism and lust 234  
 Makes it more like a tavern or a brothel  
 Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak  
 For instant remedy. Be then desired 236  
 By her that else will take the thing she begs  
 A little to disquantity your train, 239  
 And the remainders that shall still depend  
 To be such men as may besort your age, 240  
 Which know themselves, and you. 241  
 242

## LEAR

Darkness and devils !

Saddle my horses ; call my train together.  
 Degenerate bastard, I'll not trouble thee :  
 Yet have I left a daughter. 244

## GONERIL

You strike my people, and your disordered rabble  
 Make servants of their betters.

*Enter Albany.*

## LEAR

Woe that too late repents. — [O, sir, are you come ?]  
 Is it your will ? Speak, sir. — Prepare my horses.  
 Ingratitude ! thou marble-hearted fiend,  
 More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child  
 Than the sea-monster.

## ALBANY

Pray, sir, be patient.

227 admiration air of wonderment 232 deboshed debauched 234 Epicurism loose living 236 graced honored; shame disgrace 239 disquantity your train reduce the size of your retinue 240 depend be attached 241 besort befit 242 Which know i.e. who are aware of the status of 244 Degenerate unnatural, fallen away from kind

## LEAR

253 Detested kite, thou liest.  
 254 My train are men of choice and rarest parts,  
     That all particulars of duty know  
 256 And in the most exact regard support  
 257 The worships of their name. O most small fault,  
     How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show !  
 259 Which, like an engine, wrenched my frame of nature  
     From the fixed place ; drew from my heart all love  
 261 And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear !  
     Beat at this gate that let thy folly in  
     *[Strikes his head.]*

And thy dear judgment out. Go, go, my people.

## ALBANY

My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant  
     Of what hath moved you.

LEAR                                   It may be so, my lord.

Hear, Nature, hear ; dear goddess, hear :  
 Suspend thy purpose if thou didst intend  
     To make this creature fruitful.  
     Into her womb convey sterility,  
     Dry up in her the organs of increase,  
 271 And from her derivate body never spring  
 272 A babe to honor her. If she must teem,  
 273 Create her child of spleen, that it may live  
 274 And be a thwart disnatured torment to her.  
     Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,  
 276 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,  
 277 Turn all her mother's pains and benefits  
     To laughter and contempt, that she may feel

253 *Detested kite* detestable bird of prey 254 *parts* accomplishments  
 256 *exact regard* careful attention, punctilio 257 *worships* honor  
 259 *engine* destructive contrivance of war 259-60 *wrenched . . . place* set  
 askew my natural structure, distorted my normal self 261 *gall* bitterness  
 271 *derivate* degraded 272 *teem* increase 273 *spleen* ill-humor, spite-  
     fulness 274 *thwart* disnatured perverse unnatural 276 *cadent* falling;  
*fret* wear 277 *pains and benefits* care and offerings

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child. Away, away !

Exit.

ALBANY

Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this ?

GONERIL

Never afflict yourself to know more of it,  
But let his disposition have that scope  
As dotage gives it.

283

Enter Lear.

LEAR

What, fifty of my followers at a clap ?  
Within a fortnight ?

ALBANY

What's the matter, sir ?

LEAR

I'll tell thee. [to Goneril] Life and death, I am ashamed  
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus !  
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,      289  
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon  
thee !

Th' untended woundings of a father's curse      291

Pierce every sense about thee ! Old fond eyes,      292

Beweep this cause again I'll pluck ye out      293

And cast you, with the waters that you loose,      294

To temper clay. [Yea, is it come to this ?]      295

Ha ! Let it be so. I have another daughter,      297

Who I am sure is kind and comfortable.

When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails      298

She'll flay thy wolvish visage. Thou shalt find      299

That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think      300

I have cast off for ever.

Exit [Lear with Kent and Attendants].

GONERIL

Do you mark that ?

283 disposition mood 289 perforce by force, against my will 291 un-  
tended untentable, too deep for treatment by a probe 292 sense about  
faculty possessed by; fond foolish 293 Beweep this cause if you weep over  
this matter 294 loose let loose 295 temper soften 297 comfortable ready  
to comfort 300 shape i.e. role of authority

ALBANY

302 I cannot be so partial, Goneril,  
To the great love I bear you —

GONERIL

Pray you, content. — What, Oswald, ho !  
[To Fool]

You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master !

306 FOOL Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry. Take the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,  
And such a daughter,  
Should sure to the slaughter,  
If my cap would buy a halter.  
So the fool follows after.

Exit.

GONERIL

313 This man hath had good counsel — a hundred knights !  
314 'Tis politic and safe to let him keep  
315 At point a hundred knights — yes, that on every dream,  
316 Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,  
He may enguard his dotage with their pow'rs  
318 And hold our lives in mercy. — Oswald, I say !

ALBANY

Well, you may fear too far.

GONERIL Safer than trust too far.

320 Let me still take away the harms I fear,  
321 Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart.  
What he hath uttered I have writ my sister.  
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,  
When I have showed th' unfitness —

Enter Steward [Oswald]. How now, Oswald ?  
What, have you writ that letter to my sister ?

302-03 *partial* . . . *To made partial . . . by* 306 *the fool* i.e. both your fool and your folly 310 *slaughter* hanging and quartering 311, 312 *halter*, *after* (pronounced 'hauter,' 'auter') 313 *good counsel* i.e. from such company (ironic) 314 *politic* prudent 315 *At point* in arms 316 *buzz* murmur 318 *in mercy* at his mercy 320 *still . . . harms* always eliminate the sources of injury 321 *still . . . taken* always to be overtaken (by them)

OSWALD Ay, madam.

GONERIL

Take you some company, and away to horse. 327  
 Inform her full of my particular fear, 328  
 And thereto add such reasons of your own  
 As may compact it more. Get you gone, 330  
 And hasten your return. [Exit Oswald.] No, no, my lord,  
 This milky gentleness and course of yours, 332  
 Though I condemn not, yet under pardon,  
 You are much more atasked for want of wisdom 334  
 Than praised for harmful mildness. 335

ALBANY

How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell ;  
 Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

GONERIL Nay then—

ALBANY Well, well ; th' event.

*Exeunt.* 339

\*

*Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.*

I, v

LEAR Go you before to Gloucester with these letters. Ac-  
 quaint my daughter no further with anything you know  
 than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your 3  
 diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

KENT I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your  
 letter. *Exit.*

FOOL If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in  
 danger of kibes ? 8

LEAR Ay, boy.

FOOL Then I prithee be merry. Thy wit shall not go slip- 10  
 shod.

LEAR Ha, ha, ha.

327 some company an escort 328 particular own 330 compact it more  
 substantiate it further 332 milky . . . course mildly gentle way 334  
 atasked censured, taken to task 335 harmful mildness mildness that proves  
 harmful 339 th' event the outcome, i.e. we shall see what happens

I, v The courtyard of Albany's palace 3 demand out of i.e. questioning  
 provoked by reading 8 kibes chilblains 10 wit . . . slipshod intelligence  
 (brains) shall not go slippered (because of kibes)

12 FOOL Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly ;  
 13 for though she's as like this as a crab 's like an apple, yet  
 I can tell what I can tell.

LEAR What canst tell, boy ?

FOOL She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab.  
 Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' th' middle on's  
 face ?

LEAR No.

FOOL Why, to keep one's eyes of either side 's nose, that  
 what a man cannot smell out he may spy into.

21 LEAR I did her wrong.

FOOL Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell ?

LEAR No.

FOOL Nor I neither ; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

LEAR Why ?

FOOL Why, to put 's head in ; not to give it away to his  
 27 daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

28 LEAR I will forget my nature. So kind a father ! – Be my  
 horses ready ?

FOOL Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the  
 31 seven stars are no moe than seven is a pretty reason.

LEAR Because they are not eight.

FOOL Yes indeed. Thou wouldst make a good fool.

34 LEAR To take 't again perforce – Monster ingratitude !

FOOL If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten  
 for being old before thy time.

LEAR How's that ?

FOOL Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst  
 been wise.

LEAR

O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven !

12 *Shalt thou shalt*; *kindly* after her kind, i.e. in the same way as this daughter 13 *crab* crab apple 21 *her* i.e. Cordelia (the first of the remarkable intimations of Lear's inner thoughts in this scene) 27 *horns* i.e. snail's horns (with pun on cuckold's horns; the legitimacy of Goneril and Regan being, figuratively, suspect throughout); *case* covering 28 *nature* i.e. fatherly instincts 31 *moe* more 34 *perforce* by force

Keep me in temper ; I would not be mad !

[Enter a Gentleman.]

How now, are the horses ready ?

GENTLEMAN Ready, my lord.

LEAR Come, boy.

FOOL

She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure,  
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

*Exeunt.*

\*

*Enter Bastard [Edmund] and Curan severally.*

EDMUND Save thee, Curan.

CURAN And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his Duchess will be here with him this night.

EDMUND How comes that ?

CURAN Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad — I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments ?

EDMUND Not I. Pray you, what are they ?

CURAN Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany ?

EDMUND Not a word.

CURAN You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir. *Exit.*

EDMUND

The Duke be here to-night ? The better best !

This weaves itself perforce into my business.

My father hath set guard to take my brother,

And I have one thing of a queasy question

41 in temper properly balanced 45-46 She . . . shorter (an indecent gag addressed to the audience, calculated to embarrass the maids who joined in the laughter)

II, i The Earl of Gloucester's castle 1 Save God save 8 ear-kissing arguments whispered topics 10 likely probable; toward impending 14 better best (hyperbole) 15 perforce of necessity (?), of its own accord (?) 17 of . . . question delicately balanced as to outcome, touch-and-go

18 Which I must act. Briefness and fortune, work !  
Brother, a word : descend. Brother, I say !

*Enter Edgar.*

My father watches. O sir, fly this place.  
Intelligence is given where you are hid.  
You have now the good advantage of the night.  
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall ?  
He's coming hither ; now i' th' night, i' th' haste,  
And Regan with him. Have you nothing said  
26 Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany ?  
27 Advise yourself.

EDGAR I am sure on't, not a word.

EDMUND

I hear my father coming. Pardon me :  
29 In cunning I must draw my sword upon you.  
30 Draw, seem to defend yourself ; now quit you well. –  
Yield ! Come before my father ! Light ho, here ! –  
Fly, brother. – Torches, torches ! – So farewell.

*Exit Edgar.*

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion  
Of my more fierce endeavor.

[*Wounds his arm.*] I have seen drunkards  
Do more than this in sport. – Father, father !  
Stop, stop ! No help ?

*Enter Gloucester, and Servants with torches.*

GLOUCESTER

Now, Edmund, where's the villain ?

EDMUND

Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,  
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon  
To stand auspicious mistress.

GLOUCESTER

But where is he ?

18 *Briefness and fortune* decisive speed and good luck 26 *Upon his party* 'gainst i.e. reflecting upon his feud against 27 *Advise yourself* take thought; *on't* of it 29 *In cunning* i.e. as a ruse 30 *quit you* acquit yourself

EDMUND

Look, sir, I bleed.

GLOUCESTER Where is the villain, Edmund?

EDMUND

Fled this way, sir, when by no means he could -

GLOUCESTER

Pursue him, ho ! Go after. [Exeunt some Servants.]  
By no means what?

EDMUND

Persuade me to the murder of your lordship ;  
But that I told him the revenging gods  
'Gainst parricides did all the thunder bend ; 46  
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond  
The child was bound to th' father - sir, in fine, 48  
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood 49  
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion 50  
With his prepared sword he charges home  
My unprovided body, latched mine arm ; 52  
And when he saw my best alarumed spirits  
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to th' encounter, 53  
Or whether gasted by the noise I made, 54  
Full suddenly he fled. 55

GLOUCESTER Let him fly far.

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught ;  
And found - dispatch. The noble Duke my master, 58  
My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night :  
By his authority I will proclaim it  
That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,  
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake ;  
He that conceals him, death. 59

EDMUND

When I dissuaded him from his intent

46 bend aim 48 in fine finally 49 loathly opposite in loathing opposition  
50 fell deadly 52 unprovided undefended; latched lanced, pierced 53  
best alarumed fully aroused 54 Bold . . . right confident in the justice of the  
cause 55 gasted struck aghast 58 dispatch (equivalent to 'death' or  
'finis') 59 arch superior

65 And found him pight to do it, with curst speech  
 66 I threatened to discover him. He replied,  
 67 'Thou unpossessing bastard, dost thou think,  
 68 If I would stand against thee, would the reposal  
 Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee  
 70 Make thy words faithed ? No. What I should deny  
 (As this I would, ay, though thou didst produce  
 72 My very character) I'd turn it all  
 73 To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice ;  
 74 And thou must make a dullard of the world,  
 75 If they not thought the profits of my death  
 76 Were very pregnant and potential spirits  
 To make thee seek it.'

77 GLOUCESTER                    O strange and fast'ned villain !  
 78    Would he deny his letter, said he ? [I never got him.]  
*Tucket within.*

Hark, the Duke's trumpets. I know not why he comes.  
 All ports I'll bar ; the villain shall not 'scape ;  
 The Duke must grant me that. Besides, his picture  
 I will send far and near, that all the kingdom  
 May have due note of him ; and of my land,  
 Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means  
 85 To make thee capable.

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, and Attendants.*

CORNWALL

How now, my noble friend ? Since I came hither  
 87 (Which I can call but now) I have heard strange news.

REGAN

If it be true, all vengeance comes too short

65 *pight* determined, set; *curst* angry 66 *discover* expose 67 *unpossessing*  
 having no claim, landless 68 *reposal* placing 70 *faithed* believed 72  
*character* written testimony 73 *suggestion* instigation; *practice* devices  
 74 *make . . . world* i.e. consider everyone stupid 75 *not thought* did not  
 think 76 *pregnant . . . spirits* teeming and powerful spirits, i.e. the devils  
 which 'possess' him 77 *fast'ned* confirmed 78 *got* begot; s.d. *Tucket*  
 (personal signature in trumpet notes) 85 *capable* i.e. legitimate, able to  
 inherit 87 *call* i.e. say was

Which can pursue th' offender. How dost, my lord ?

**GLOUCESTER**

O madam, my old heart is cracked, it's cracked.

**REGAN**

What, did my father's godson seek your life ?

He whom my father named, your Edgar ?

**GLOUCESTER**

O lady, lady, shame would have it hid.

**REGAN**

Was he not companion with the riotous knights

That tended upon my father ?

**GLOUCESTER**

I know not, madam. 'Tis too bad, too bad.

**EDMUND**

Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

97

**REGAN**

No marvel then though he were ill affected.

98

'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,

99

To have th' expense and waste of his revenues.

100

I have this present evening from my sister

Been well informed of them, and with such cautions

That, if they come to sojourn at my house,

I'll not be there.

**CORNWALL** Nor I, assure thee, Regan.

Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father

106

A childlike office.

**EDMUND** It was my duty, sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

107

He did bewray his practice, and received

This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

**CORNWALL**

Is he pursued ?

**GLOUCESTER** Ay, my good lord.

97 consort company, set 98 affected disposed 99 put set 100 expense and waste wasteful expenditure 106 childlike filial 107 bewray his practice expose his plot

CORNWALL

111      If he be taken, he shall never more  
 111      Be feared of doing harm. Make your own purpose,  
 112      How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,  
 113      Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant  
 113      So much commend itself, you shall be ours.  
 Natures of such deep trust we shall much need ;  
 You we first seize on.

EDMUND                    I shall serve you, sir,  
 Truly, however else.

GLOUCESTER              For him I thank your Grace.

CORNWALL

You know not why we came to visit you ?

REGAN

120      Thus out of season, threading dark-eyed night.  
 120      Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some prize,  
 121      Wherein we must have use of your advice.  
 121      Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,  
 122      Of differences, which I best thought it fit  
 123      To answer from our home. The several messengers  
 124      From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,  
 125      Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow  
 126      Your needful counsel to our businesses,  
 127      Which craves the instant use.

GLOUCESTER              I serve you, madam.

Your Graces are right welcome.              *Exeunt. Flourish.*



111 *of doing* lest he do 111-12 *Make . . . please* i.e. accomplish your purpose, making free use of my powers 113 *virtue and obedience* virtuous obedience 120 *prize* price, importance 123 *differences* quarrels; *which* (refers, indefinitely, to the whole situation) 124 *answer . . . home* cope with away from home (where she need not receive Lear) 125 *attend dispatch* i.e. await settlement of the business 126 *Lay . . . bosom* be consoled (about your own trouble) 127 *needful* needed 128 *craves . . . use* requires immediate transaction (?), requires use of your counsel (?)

Enter Kent and Steward [Oswald], severally. II, ii

OSWALD Good dawning to thee, friend. Art of this house? 1

KENT Ay.

OSWALD Where may we set our horses?

KENT I' th' mire.

OSWALD Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me.

KENT I love thee not.

OSWALD Why then, I care not for thee.

KENT If I had thee in Lipsbury Pinfold, I would make 8  
thee care for me.

OSWALD Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

KENT Fellow, I know thee.

OSWALD What dost thou know me for?

KENT A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, 13  
proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, 14  
filthy worsted-stockinged knave; a lily-livered, action- 15  
taking, whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical 16  
rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a 17  
bawd in way of good service, and art nothing but the  
composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the 19  
son and heir of a mongrel bitch; one whom I will beat  
into clamorous whining if thou deny'st the least syllable  
of thy addition. 22

OSWALD Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to  
rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

KENT What a brazen-faced varlet art thou to deny thou  
knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy  
heels and beat thee before the King? [Draws his sword.]

II, ii Before Gloucester's castle 1 *dawning* (perhaps indicating that it is too early for 'good morning'); *Art . . . house* i.e. do you belong to this household 8 *Lipsbury Pinfold* i.e. between the teeth (cant term: 'pen in the region of the lips') 13 *broken meats* scraps 14 *three-suited* with three suits (the wardrobe allowed serving-men); *hundred-pound* (the minimal estate for anyone aspiring to gentility) 15 *worsted-stockinged* (serving-men's attire) 15-16 *action-taking* i.e. cowardly (resorting to law instead of fighting) 16 *glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical* i.e. conceited, toadying, foppish 17 *inheriting* possessing 17-18 *a bawd . . . service* i.e. a pander, if pleasing your employer required it 19 *composition composite*  
22 *addition titles*

29 Draw, you rogue, for though it be night, yet the moon  
 shines. I'll make a sop o' th' moonshine of you. You  
 30 whoreson cullionly barberman, draw !

OSWALD Away, I have nothing to do with thee.

KENT Draw, you rascal. You come with letters against the  
 33 King, and take Vanity the puppet's part against the  
 34 royalty of her father. Draw, you rogue, or I'll so car-  
 35 bonado your shanks. Draw, you rascal. Come your ways !

OSWALD Help, ho ! Murder ! Help !

37 KENT Strike, you slave ! Stand, rogue ! Stand, you neat  
 slave ! Strike !

[Beats him.]

OSWALD Help, ho ! Murder, murder !

Enter Bastard [Edmund, with his rapier drawn],  
 Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, Servants.

EDMUND How now ? What's the matter ? Part !

41 KENT With you, goodman boy, if you please ! Come, I'll  
 42 flesh ye ; come on, young master.

GLOUCESTER Weapons ? Arms ? What's the matter here ?

CORNWALL Keep peace, upon your lives. He dies that  
 strikes again. What is the matter ?

REGAN The messengers from our sister and the King.

CORNWALL What is your difference ? Speak.

OSWALD I am scarce in breath, my lord.

49 KENT No marvel, you have so bestirred your valor. You  
 50 cowardly rascal, Nature disclaims in thee. A tailor made  
 thee.

CORNWALL Thou art a strange fellow. A tailor make a  
 man ?

29 *sop o' th' moonshine* i.e. something that sops up moonshine through its perforations 30 *cullionly barberman* vile fop (i.e. always dealing with hairdressers) 33 *Vanity the puppet* i.e. Goneril (here equated with a stock figure in morality plays, now dwindled into puppet shows) 34 *carbonado* (cut into strips or cubes) 35 *your ways* get along 37 *neat* primping 41 *goodman boy* (doubly contemptuous, since peasants were addressed as 'goodmen') 42 *flesh ye* give you your first taste of blood 49 *bestirred* exercised 50 *disclaims* claims no part

KENT A tailor, sir. A stonecutter or a painter could not 53  
have made him so ill, though they had been but two  
years o' th' trade.

CORNWALL

Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

OSWALD This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have  
spared at suit of his gray beard –

KENT Thou whoreson zed, thou unnecessary letter! My 58  
lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted 59  
villain into mortar and daub the wall of a jakes with him. 60  
Spare my gray beard? you wagtail. 61

CORNWALL

Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

KENT

Yes, sir, but anger hath a privilege.

CORNWALL

Why art thou angry?

KENT

That such a slave as this should wear a sword,

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these

Like rats oft bite the holy cords atwain

69

Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every passion

70

That in the natures of their lords rebel,

71

Being oil to fire, snow to the colder moods;

72

Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks

73

With every gale and vary of their masters,

74

53 *stonecutter* sculptor 58 *at suit of* on the plea of, moved to mercy by  
59 *zed* (last and least useful of letters) 60 *unbolted* unsifted, crude 61  
*jakes* privy 62 *wagtail* (any of several birds whose tail-feathers wag or  
bob, suggesting obsequiousness or effeminacy) 64 *beastly* beast-like,  
irrational 69 *holy cords* sacred bonds (between parents and children,  
husbands and wives, man and God) 70 *intrinse* intrinsic, inextricable;  
*smooth* flatter, cater to 71 *rebel* (i.e. against reason and moral restraint)  
72 *Being . . . moods* (i.e. feeders of intemperance) 73 *Renege* deny; *halcyon*  
*beaks* kingfisher beaks (supposedly serving as weather vanes when the birds  
were hung up by their necks) 74 *gale and vary* varying wind

Knowing naught, like dogs, but following.

76 A plague upon your epileptic visage !

77 Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool ?

78 Goose, if I had you upon Sarum Plain,

79 I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

**CORNWALL**

What, art thou mad, old fellow ?

**GLOUCESTER**

How fell you out ? Say that.

**KENT**

82 No contraries hold more antipathy

Than I and such a knave.

**CORNWALL**

Why dost thou call him knave ? What is his fault ?

**KENT**

His countenance likes me not.

**CORNWALL**

No more perchance does mine, nor his, nor hers.

**KENT**

Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain :

I have seen better faces in my time

Than stands on any shoulder that I see

Before me at this instant.

**CORNWALL**

This is some fellow

Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect

92 A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb

Quite from his nature. He cannot flatter, he ;

An honest mind and plain – he must speak truth.

An they will take it, so ; if not, he's plain.

These kind of knaves I know which in this plainness

Harbor more craft and more corrupter ends

76 *epileptic* contorted in a grin (?) 77 *Smile you* smile you at, mock you

78 *Sarum Plain* Salisbury Plain (said to have been associated with geese, but the allusion remains cryptic) 79 *Camelot* legendary seat of King Arthur, variously sited at Winchester, near Cadbury, in Wales, etc.

82 *contraries* opposites 92–93 *constrains* . . . *nature* distorts the plain fashion from its true nature, caricatures it



119 KENT None of these rogues and cowards  
But Ajax is their fool.

CORNWALL Fetch forth the stocks!

121 You stubborn ancient knave, you reverent braggart,  
We'll teach you.

KENT Sir, I am too old to learn.

Call not your stocks for me, I serve the King –

On whose employment I was sent to you ;

125 You shall do small respect, show too bold malice

126 Against the grace and person of my master,  
Stocking his messenger.

CORNWALL

Fetch forth the stocks. As I have life and honor,  
There shall he sit till noon.

REGAN

Till noon ? Till night, my lord, and all night too.

KENT

Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,

You should not use me so.

REGAN

Sir, being his knave, I will.

CORNWALL

133 This is a fellow of the selfsame color

134 Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks.  
*Stocks brought out.*

GLOUCESTER

Let me beseech your Grace not to do so.

[His fault is much, and the good King his master

137 Will check him for't. Your purposed low correction  
138 Is such as basest and contemnèd'st wretches

For pilf'rings and most common trespasses  
Are punished with.]

119-20 *None . . . fool* i.e. the Ajax type, stupidly belligerent, is the favorite butt of cowardly rogues like Oswald 121 *stubborn* rude; *reverent* aged 125 *malice* ill will 126 *grace* royal honor 133 *color* kind 134 *away* along 137 *check* rebuke; *purposed* intended 138 *contemnèd'st* most harshly sentenced

The King his master needs must take it ill  
 That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,  
 Should have him thus restrained.

142

CORNWALL I'll answer that.

143

REGAN

My sister may receive it much more worse,  
 To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,  
 [For following her affairs. Put in his legs.]

[*Kent is put in the stocks.*]

CORNWALL

Come, my lord, away!

*Exit [with all but Gloucester and Kent].*

GLOUCESTER

I am sorry for thee, friend. 'Tis the Duke's pleasure,  
 Whose disposition all the world well knows  
 Will not be rubbed nor stopped. I'll entreat for thee.

149

150

KENT

Pray do not, sir. I have watched and travelled hard.  
 Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.  
 A good man's fortune may grow out at heels.  
 Give you good morrow.

151

153

154

GLOUCESTER

The Duke's to blame in this. 'Twill be ill taken. *Exit.* 155

KENT

Good King, that must approve the common saw,  
 Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st  
 To the warm sun.  
 Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,  
 That by thy comfortable beams I may

156

157

159

142 slightly valued in i.e. little respected in the person of 143 answer answer for 149 disposition inclination 150 rubbed deflected (bowling term) 151 watched gone sleepless 153 A good . . . heels i.e. it is no disgrace to decline in fortune 154 Give God give 155 taken received 156 approve demonstrate the truth of; saw saying, proverb 157-58 Thou . . . sun (proverb, meaning from better to worse, i.e. from heavenly shelter to earthly exposure – 'the heat of the day') 159 beacon . . . globe i.e. the sun (here viewed as benign)

161 Peruse this letter. Nothing almost sees miracles  
 But misery. I know 'tis from Cordelia,  
 Who hath most fortunately been informed  
 164 Of my obscured course. And shall find time  
 165 From this enormous state, seeking to give  
 166 Losses their remedies. – All weary and o'erwatched,  
 167 Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold  
 168 This shameful lodging. Fortune, good night ;  
 169 Smile once more ; turn thy wheel.

[Sleeps.]

Enter Edgar.

EDGAR

I heard myself proclaimed,  
 2 And by the happy hollow of a tree  
 Escaped the hunt. No port is free, no place  
 That guard and most unusual vigilance  
 5 Does not attend my taking. Whilst I may 'scape,  
 6 I will preserve myself ; and am bethought  
 To take the basest and most poorest shape  
 That ever penury, in contempt of man,  
 Brought near to beast : my face I'll grime with filth,  
 10 Blanket my loins, elf all my hairs in knots,  
 11 And with presented nakedness outface  
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
 13 The country gives me proof and precedent  
 14 Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,  
 15 Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms  
 16 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary ;

161-62 *Nothing . . . misery* i.e. miraculous aid is seldom seen 'or searched for?) except by the miserable 164 *obscured* disguised 164-66 *And . . . remedies* (incoherent: perhaps corrupt, or perhaps snatches read from the letter) 165 *enormous state* monstrous situation 166 *Losses* reverses 167 *vantage* i.e. advantage of sleep 168 *lodging* (in the stocks) 169 *wheel* (Fortune's wheel was represented as vertical. Kent is at its bottom.) II, iii 2 *happy hollow* i.e. lucky hiding-place 5 *attend my taking* contemplate my capture 6 *bethought* in mind 10 *elf* tangle (into 'elf-locks') 11 *presented* a show of 13 *proof* example 14 *Bedlam* (see I, ii, 131-32n.) 15 *Strike* stick; *mortified* deadened to pain 16 *pricks* skewers

And with this horrible object, from low farms, 17  
 Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills, 18  
 Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers, 19  
 Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod, poor Tom, 20  
 That's something yet : Edgar I nothing am. 21

Exit.

*Enter Lear, Fool, and Gentleman.*

II, iv

LEAR

'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,  
 And not send back my messenger.

GENTLEMAN

As I learned,

3

The night before there was no purpose in them  
 Of this remove.

4

KENT

Hail to thee, noble master.

LEAR Ha !

Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime ?

KENT

No, my lord.

FOOL Ha, ha, he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by 7  
 the heads, dogs and bears by th' neck, monkeys by th'  
 loins, and men by th' legs. When a man 's over-lusty at 9  
 legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks. 10

LEAR

What's he that hath so much thy place mistook  
 To set thee here ?

KENT

It is both he and she,

Your son and daughter.

LEAR No.

KENT Yes.

LEAR No, I say.

KENT I say yea.

[LEAR No, no, they would not.]

17 *object* picture 18 *pelting* paltry 19 *bans* curses 20 *Turlygod* (un-  
 identified, but evidently another name for a Tom o' Bedlam) 21 *Edgar* i.e.  
 as Edgar

II, iv 3 *purpose* intention 4 *remove* removal 7 *cruel* painful (with pun  
 on 'crewel,' a yarn used in garters) 9-10 *over-lusty at legs* i.e. too much on  
 the go (?), or too much given to kicking (?) 10 *nether-stocks* stockings (as  
 distinct from 'upper-stocks' or breeches)

KENT Yes, they have.]

LEAR

By Jupiter, I swear no !

KENT

By Juno, I swear ay !

LEAR

They durst not do't ;

They could not, would not do't. 'Tis worse than murder

23 To do upon respect such violent outrage.

24 Resolve me with all modest haste which way

Thou mightst deserve or thy impose this usage,  
Coming from us.

KENT

My lord, when at their home

27 I did commend your Highness' letters to them,

Ere I was risen from the place that showed

My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,

30 Stewed in his haste, half breathless, panting forth

From Goneril his mistress salutations ;

32 Delivered letters, spite of intermission,

33 Which presently they read ; on whose contents

34 They summoned up their meinys, straight took horse,

Commanded me to follow and attend

The leisure of their answer, gave me cold looks ;

And meeting here the other messenger,

Whose welcome I perceived had poisoned mine,

Being the very fellow which of late

40 Displayed so saucily against your Highness,

41 Having more man than wit about me, drew ;

42 He raised the house with loud and coward cries.

Your son and daughter found this trespass worth

The shame which here it suffers.

45 FOOL Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way.

23 *To . . . outrage* i.e. to show such outrageous disrespect 24 *Resolve* enlighten; *modest seemly* 27 *commend* entrust 30 *Stewed* steaming 32 *s spite of intermission* in disregard of its being an interruption 33 *presently* immediately; *on on* the strength of 34 *meinys* attendants 40 *Displayed* showed off 41 *man* manhood; *wit* sense 42 *raised* aroused 45 *Winter's . . . way* i.e. the ill season continues according to these signs (with Cornwall and Regan equated with *wild geese*, proverbially evasive)

Fathers that wear rags	
Do make their children blind,	47
But fathers that bear bags	48
Shall see their children kind.	
Fortune, that arrant whore,	50
Ne'er turns the key to th' poor.	51
But for all this, thou shalt have as many dolors for thy	52
daughters as thou canst tell in a year.	53

LEAR

O, how this mother swells up toward my heart !	54
Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow ;	55
Thy element 's below. Where is this daughter ?	56

KENT

With the Earl, sir, here within.

LEAR

Stay here. Follow me not ; *Exit.*

GENTLEMAN

Made you no more offense but what you speak of ?

KENT

None.

How chance the King comes with so small a number ?

FOOL An thou hadst been set i' th' stocks for that question, thou'dst well deserved it.

KENT

Why, fool ?

FOOL We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no laboring i' th' winter. All that follow their 66 noses are led by their eyes but blind men, and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following. But the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after. When a wise man

47 *blind* (to their fathers' needs) 48 *bags* (of gold) 50 *Fortune . . . whore* (because so fickle and callous) 51 *turns the key* i.e. opens the door 52 *dolors* sorrows (with pun on 'dollars,' continental coins) 53 *tell* count 54, 55 *mother, Hysterica passio* hysteria (the popular and the medical terms) 56 *element* proper place 66 *no laboring . . . winter* (Lear, accompanied by *so small a number*, is equated with winter bereft of workers, such as ants) 66-68 *All . . . stinking* i.e. almost anyone can smell out a person decayed in fortune

gives thee better counsel, give me mine again. I would  
 73 have none but knaves follow it since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,

75 And follows but for form,

76 Will pack when it begins to rain

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry ; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly.

80 The knave turns fool that runs away ;

81 The fool no knave, perdy.

KENT Where learned you this, fool ?

83 FOOL Not i' th' stocks, fool.

*Enter Lear and Gloucester.*

LEAR

Deny to speak with me ? They are sick, they are weary,

85 They have travelled all the night ? Mere fetches,

86 The images of revolt and flying off !

Fetch me a better answer.

GLOUCESTER My dear lord,

88 You know the fiery quality of the Duke,

How unremovable and fixed he is

In his own course.

LEAR Vengeance, plague, death, confusion !

Fiery ? What quality ? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,

I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

GLOUCESTER

Well, my good lord, I have informed them so.

LEAR

Informed them ? Dost thou understand me, man ?

GLOUCESTER

Ay, my good lord. |

73 *none but knaves* (here and in what follows the Fool repudiates his advice to abandon Lear) 75 *form* show 76 *pack be off* 80 *The knave . . . away* i.e. faithlessness is the true folly 81 *perdy* I swear (from 'par dieu') 83 *fool* (persiflage, but also a term of honour; cf. V, iii, 306n.) 85 *fetches* counterfeit reasons, false likenesses of truth 86 *images* true likenesses; *flying off* revolt 88 *quality* disposition

## LEAR

The King would speak with Cornwall. The dear father  
Would with his daughter speak, commands – tends – 97  
service.

Are they informed of this? My breath and blood!

Fiery? The fiery Duke, tell the hot Duke that –

No, but not yet. May be he is not well.

Infirmity doth still neglect all office

101

Whereto our health is bound. We are not ourselves

102

When nature, being oppressed, commands the mind

To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;

And am fallen out with my more headier will

105

To take the indisposed and sickly fit

For the sound man. – Death on my state! Wherefore

108

Should he sit here? This act persuades me

109

That this remotion of the Duke and her

110

Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.

Go tell the Duke and 's wife I'd speak with them!

112

Now, presently! Bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum

113

Till it cry sleep to death.

114

## GLOUCESTER

I would have all well betwixt you.

Exit.

## LEAR

O me, my heart, my rising heart! But down!

FOOL Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when 117  
she put 'em i' th' paste alive. She knapped 'em o' th' cox- 118  
combs with a stick and cried, 'Down, wantons, down!' 119  
'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse,  
buttered his hay. 121

97 *tends* attends, awaits (?), *tenders*, offers (?) 101 *all office* duties 102  
*Whereto* . . . *bound* to which, in health, we are bound 105 *headier* head-  
strong 108 *he* i.e. Kent 109 *remotion* remaining remote, inaccessible  
110 *practice* trickery 112 *presently* immediately 114 *cry* pursue with  
noise (like a pack or 'cry' of hounds) 117 *cockney* city-dweller 118  
*paste* pastry pie; *knapped* rapped 119 *wanton*s i.e. frisky things 121  
*buttered his hay* (another example of rustic humor at the expense of cockney  
inexperience)

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, Servants.*

LEAR

Good Morrow to you both.

CORNWALL

Hail to your Grace.

*Kent here set at liberty.*

REGAN

I am glad to see your Highness.

LEAR

Regan, I think you are. I know what reason  
 I have to think so. If thou shouldst not be glad,  
 126 I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,  
 Sepulchring an adulteress. [to Kent] O, are you free?  
 Some other time for that. – Beloved Regan,  
 Thy sister's naught. O Regan, she hath tied  
 Sharp-toothed unkindness, like a vulture, here.  
 I can scarce speak to thee. Thou'lt not believe  
 132 With how depraved a quality – O Regan!

REGAN

I pray you, sir, take patience. I have hope  
 You less know how to value her desert  
 135 Than she to scant her duty.

LEAR

Say? How is that?

REGAN

I cannot think my sister in the least  
 Would fail her obligation. If, sir, perchance  
 She have restrained the riots of your followers,  
 'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,  
 As clears her from all blame.

LEAR

My curses on her!

REGAN

O, sir, you are old;

142 Nature in you stands on the very verge

126–27 *divorce . . . adulteress* i.e. refuse to be buried with your mother since such a child as you must have been conceived in adultery 132 *how . . . quality* i.e. what innate depravity 133 *have hope* i.e. suspect 135 *scant* (in effect, a double negative; 'do' would be more logical though less emphatic) 142–43 *Nature . . . confine* i.e. your life nears the limit of its tenure

Of his confine. You should be ruled, and led  
 By some discretion that discerns your state  
 Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you  
 That to our sister you do make return ;  
 Say you have wronged her.

144

LEAR Ask her forgiveness ?

Do you but mark how this becomes the house :  
 'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old.'

148

[Kneels.]

Age is unnecessary. On my knees I beg  
 That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

REGAN

Good sir, no more. These are unsightly tricks.  
 Return you to my sister.

LEAR [rises] Never, Regan.

She hath abated me of half my train,  
 Looked black upon me, struck me with her tongue  
 Most serpent-like upon the very heart.  
 All the stored vengeances of heaven fall  
 On her ingrateful top ! Strike her young bones,  
 You taking airs, with lameness.

154

158

159

CORNWALL Fie, sir, fie !

LEAR

You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames  
 Into her scornful eyes ! Infect her beauty,  
 You fen-sucked fogs drawn by the pow'rful sun  
 To fall and blister —

162

163

REGAN O the blessed gods !

So will you wish on me when the rash mood is on.

LEAR

No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse.  
 Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give

166

144 *some discretion* . . . *state* someone discerning enough to recognize your condition 148 *the house* household or family decorum 154 *abated* curtailed 158 *ingrateful top* ungrateful head 159 *taking* infectious 162 *fen-sucked* drawn up from swamps 163 *fall and blister* strike and raise blisters (such as those of smallpox) 166 *tender-hefted* swayed by tenderness, gently disposed

Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce, but thine  
Do comfort, and not burn. 'Tis not in thee  
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,  
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,  
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt  
Against my coming in. Thou better know'st  
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,  
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude.  
Thy half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot,  
Wherein I thee endowed.

LEAR

Who put my man i' th' stocks?

CORNWALL

## What trumpet's that?

REGAN

178 I know't - my sister's. This approves her letter,  
That she would soon be here.

*Enter Steward [Oswald]. Is your lady come?*

LEAR

180 This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride  
181 Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.  
182 Out, varlet, from my sight.

## CORNWALL.

What means your Grace?

LEARN

Who stocked my servant ? Regan, I have good hope  
Thou didst not know on't

Enter Goneril. Who comes here? O heavens!

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway,

186 Allow obedience, if you yourselves are old.

187 Make it your cause. Send down, and take my part.

170 bandy volley; sizes allowances 171 oppose the bolt i.e. bar the door  
173 offices of nature natural duties 174 Effects actions 176 purpose point  
178 approves confirms 180 easy-borrowed acquired on small security 181  
grace favor 182 varlet low fellow 186 Allow approve 187 Make...cause  
i.e. make my cause yours



211 Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
 212 To this detested groom.

GONERIL

At your choice, sir.

LEAR

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.  
 I will not trouble thee, my child ; farewell.  
 We'll no more meet, no more see one another.  
 But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter ;  
 Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
 Which I must needs call mine. Thou art a boil,  
 219 A plague-sore, or embossèd carbuncle  
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee.  
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it.  
 222 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,  
 223 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.  
 Mend when thou canst, be better at thy leisure ;  
 I can be patient, I can stay with Regan,  
 I and my hundred knights.

REGAN

Not altogether so.

I looked not for you yet, nor am provided  
 For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister ;  
 229 For those that mingle reason with your passion  
 Must be content to think you old and so –  
 But she knows what she does.

LEAR

Is this well spoken ?

REGAN

232 I dare avouch it, sir. What, fifty followers ?  
 Is it not well ? What should you need of more ?  
 234 Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger  
 Speak 'gainst so great a number ? How in one house  
 Should many people, under two commands,  
 Hold amity ? 'Tis hard, almost impossible.

211 *sumpter* packhorse 212 *groom* i.e. Oswald 219 *embossèd* risen to a head 222 *thunder-bearer* i.e. Jupiter 223 *high-judging* judging from on high 229  *mingle . . . passion* interpret your passion in the light of reason 232 *avouch* swear by 234 *sith that* since ; *charge* expense

GONERIL

Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance  
From those that she calls servants, or from mine ?

REGAN

Why not, my lord ? If then they chanced to slack ye,  
We could control them. If you will come to me  
(For now I spy a danger), I entreat you  
To bring but five-and-twenty. To no more  
Will I give place or notice.

240

244

LEAR

I gave you all.

REGAN And in good time you gave it.

LEAR

Made you my guardians, my depositaries,  
But kept a reservation to be followèd  
With such a number. What, must I come to you  
With five-and-twenty ? Regan, said you so ?

246

247

REGAN

And speak't again, my lord. No more with me.

LEAR

Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favored  
When others are more wicked ; not being the worst  
Stands in some rank of praise.

251

253

[*To Goneril*] I'll go with thee.

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

255

GONERIL

Hear me, my lord.

What need you five-and-twenty ? ten ? or five ?  
To follow in a house where twice so many  
Have a command to tend you ?

REGAN

What need one ?

240 *slack* neglect 244 *notice* recognition 246 *depositaries* trustees

247 *kept* . . . to be stipulated that I be 251 *well-favored* comely 253

*Stands* . . . *praise* i.e. is at least relatively praiseworthy 255 *her love* i.e. as

loving as she

## LEAR

259 O reason not the need ! Our basest beggars  
 260 Are in the poorest thing superfluous.  
 261 Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
 Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady :  
 263 If only to go warm were gorgeous,  
 Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,  
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need –  
 You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need.  
 You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,  
 As full of grief as age, wretched in both.  
 If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts  
 270 Against their father, fool me not so much  
 To bear it tamely ; touch me with noble anger,  
 And let not women's weapons, water drops,  
 Stain my man's cheeks. No, you unnatural hags !  
 I will have such revenges on you both  
 That all the world shall – I will do such things –  
 What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be  
 The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep.  
 No, I'll not weep.

*Storm and tempest.*

280 I have full cause of weeping, but this heart  
 Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws  
 281 Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad !

*Exeunt [Lear, Fool, Kent, and Gloucester].*

## CORNWALL

Let us withdraw ; 'twill be a storm.

## REGAN

This house is little ; the old man and 's people  
 Cannot be well bestowed.

259 *reason analyze* 260 *Are . . . superfluous* i.e. have some poor possession not utterly indispensable 261 *than nature needs* i.e. than life needs for mere survival 263–65 *If . . . warm* i.e. if to be dressed warmly (i.e. for need) were considered sufficiently gorgeous, you would not need your present attire, which is gorgeous rather than warm 270 *fool* play with, humiliate 280 *flaws* fragments 281 *Or ere* before

GONERIL

"Tis his own blame, hath put himself from rest  
And must needs leave his folly

285

REGAN

For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,  
But not one follower.

287

GONERIL

So am I purposed.

288

Where is my Lord of Gloucester?

CORNWALL

I followed the old man forth.

[Enter Gloucester] He is returned.

GLOUCESTER

The King is in high rage.

CORNWALL

Whether is he going?

GLOUCESTER

He can no worse, but will I know not whither.

CORNWALL

"I have no way, he leads himself."

GONERIL

My lord entreat him by no means to stay.

GLOUCESTER

Black is the night o'er me, and the high winds  
Do sorely ruffle. For many miles about  
There scarce a bush.

289

REGAN

O, sir, to willful men

I have seen that they themselves procure  
What oftentimes betters. Shut up your doors.

He is attended with a desperate train

And what they may incense him to, being apt  
To have better advised, wisdom bids fear.

301

CORNWALL

Shut up your doors, my lord, 'tis a wild night.

W, Regan, and as well. Come out o' th' storm. *Exeunt.*

. . .

285. *blame* = responsibility for having the rest of place with her (i.e. in a fit of rage); 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 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916, 917, 918, 919, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 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1173, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1199, 1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1209, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1209, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1229, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1229, 1230, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1230, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258, 1259, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258, 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1421, 1422, 1423, 1424, 1425, 1426, 1427, 1428, 1429, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1433, 1434, 1435, 1436, 1437, 1438, 1439, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1433, 1434, 1435, 1436, 1437, 1438, 1439, 1440, 1441, 1442, 1443, 1444, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448, 1449, 1440, 1441, 1442, 1443, 1444, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448, 1449, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1458, 1459, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1458, 1459, 1460, 1461, 1462, 1463, 1464, 1465, 1466, 1467, 1468, 1469, 1460, 1461, 1462, 1463, 1464, 1465, 1466, 1467, 1468, 1469, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1473, 1474, 1475, 1476, 1477, 1478, 1479, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1473, 1474, 1475, 1476, 1477, 1478, 1479, 1480, 1481, 1482, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1486, 1487, 1488, 1489, 1480, 1481, 1482, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1486, 1487, 1488, 1489, 1490, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1490, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1500, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1505, 1506, 1507, 1508, 1509, 1500, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1505, 1506, 1507, 150

III, i      *Storm still. Enter Kent and a Gentleman severally.*

KENT

Who's there besides foul weather ?

GENTLEMAN

2      One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

KENT

I know you. Where's the King ?

GENTLEMAN

4      Contending with the fretful elements ;  
 Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,  
 6      Or swell the curlèd waters 'bove the main,  
 7      That things might change or cease ; [tears his white hair,  
 8      Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,  
 Catch in their fury and make nothing of ;  
 10     Strives in his little world of man to outscorn  
 The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.  
 12     This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,  
 13     The lion and the belly-pinchèd wolf  
 Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,  
 15     And bids what will take all.]

KENT

But who is with him ?

GENTLEMAN

None but the fool, who labors to outjest  
 His heart-struck injuries.

KENT

Sir, I do know you,

18     And dare upon the warrant of my note  
 19     Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,  
 Although as yet the face of it is covered  
 With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall ;  
 22     Who have – as who have not, that their great stars

III, i An open heath 2 minded . . . unquietly i.e. in disturbed mood 4  
 Contending quarrelling 6 main mainland 7 change revert to chaos (?),  
 improve (?) 8 eyeless (1) blind, (2) invisible 10 little world (the 'microcosm,' which is disturbed like the great world or 'macrocosm') 12 cub-drawn cub-sucked (and hence ravenous) 13 belly-pinchèd famished 15 take all (the cry of the desperate gambler in staking his last) 18 warrant . . . note assurance of my knowledge 19 Commend . . . thing entrust a precious matter 22 that whom; stars destinies

Throned and set high ? – servants, who seem no less,	23
Which are to France the spies and speculations	24
Intelligent of our state. What hath been seen,	25
Either in snuffs and packings of the Dukes,	26
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne	27
Against the old kind King, or something deeper,	
Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings –	29
[But, true it is, from France there comes a power	30
Into this scatterèd kingdom, who already,	31
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet	
In some of our best ports and are at point	
To show their open banner. Now to you :	
If on my credit you dare build so far	35
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find	
Some that will thank you, making just report	
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow	38
The King hath cause to plain.	39
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,	
And from some knowledge and assurance offer	
This office to you.]	42

GENTLEMAN

I will talk further with you.

KENT No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more  
 Than my out-wall, open this purse and take  
 What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,  
 As fear not but you shall, show her this ring,  
 And she will tell you who that fellow is  
 That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm !  
 I will go seek the King.

45

GENTLEMAN

Give me your hand. Have you no more to say ?

*23 Throned* have throned; *no less* i.e. truly so *24 speculations* spies *25 Intelligent* supplying intelligence *26 snuffs* quarrels; *packings* intrigues *27 hard rein* . . . *borne* i.e. harsh curbs . . . exercised *29 furnishings* pretexts *30 power* army *31 scatterèd* divided *35 my credit* trust in me; *build* take constructive action *38 bemadding sorrow* maddening grievances *39 plain lament* *42 office* service *45 out-wall* surface appearance

## KENT

52 Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet :  
 53 That when we have found the King – in which your pain  
 That way, I'll this – he that first lights on him  
 Holla the other. Exeunt [severally].

\*

III, ii *Storm still. Enter Lear and Fool.*

## LEAR

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks. Rage, blow.  
 2 You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout  
 3 Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks.  
 4 You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,  
 5 Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
 Singe my white head. And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
 Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world,  
 8 Crack Nature's moulds, all germaine spill at once,  
 That makes ingrateful man.  
 10 FOOL O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better  
 than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in ; ask  
 thy daughters blessing. Here's a night pities neither  
 wise men nor fools.

## LEAR

Rumble thy bellyful. Spit, fire. Spout, rain.  
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters.  
 16 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness.  
 I never gave you kingdom, called you children ;  
 18 You owe me no subscription. Then let fall  
 19 Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave,  
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.

52 *to effect* in their import 53 *pain* pains, care

III, ii The same 2 *hurricanoes* water-spouts 3 *cocks* weathercocks  
 4 *thought-executing fires* i.e. flashes of lightning swift as thought (?),  
 dazing, numbing the mind (?) 5 *Vaunt-couriers* heralds 8 *moulds* (in  
 which Nature's creations are formed); germaine seeds 10 *court holy-water*  
 flattery (slang) 16 *tax* charge 18 *subscription* deference 19 *pleasure*  
 will

But yet I call you servile ministers, 21  
 That will with two pernicious daughters join  
 Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head  
 So old and white as this. O, ho ! 'tis foul. 23

FOOL He that has a house to put 's head in has a good  
 headpiece.

The codpiece that will house 27  
 Before the head has any,  
 The head and he shall louse : 29  
 So beggars marry many. 30  
 The man that makes his toe  
 What he his heart should make 31  
 Shall of a corn cry woe,  
 And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made 35  
 mouths in a glass.

*Enter Kent.*

LEAR

No, I will be the pattern of all patience ;  
 I will say nothing.

KENT Who's there ?

FOOL Marry, here's grace and a codpiece ; that's a wise  
 man and a fool.

KENT

Alas, sir, are you here ? Things that love night  
 Love not such nights as these. The wrathful skies  
 Gallow the very wanderers of the dark 44  
 And make them keep their caves. Since I was man, 45

21 *ministers* agents 23 *high-engendered battles* heavenly battalions 27-30  
*The codpiece . . . many* (the moral of the rime is that improvident cohabitation spells penury) 27 *codpiece* padded gusset at the crotch of the breeches (slang for penis) 29 *he it* 30 *many* (head-lice and body-lice, accompanying poverty) 31-34 *The man . . . wake* (a parallel instance of misery deriving from reckless impulse: to transpose the tender and precious heart and the tough and base toe is to invite injury; with *heart* also suggesting Cordelia) 35-36 *made . . . glass* i.e. posed before a mirror (irrelevant, except as vanity is a form of folly, the Fool's general theme) 44  
*Gallow* frighten 45 *keep their caves* i.e. keep under cover

46 Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,  
 Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never  
 48 Remember to have heard. Man's nature cannot carry  
 Th' affliction nor the fear.

LEAR Let the great gods  
 50 That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads  
 51 Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,  
 That hast within thee undivulgèd crimes  
 Unwhipped of justice. Hide thee, thou bloody hand,  
 54 Thou perjured, and thou simular of virtue  
 That art incestuous. Caitiff, to pieces shake,  
 56 That under covert and convenient seeming  
 57 Has practiced on man's life. Close pent-up guilts,  
 58 Rive your concealing continents and cry  
 59 These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man  
 More sinned against than sinning.

KENT Alack, bareheaded ?  
 61 Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel ;  
 Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest.  
 63 Repose you there, while I to this hard house  
 (More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised,  
 65 Which even but now, demanding after you,  
 Denied me to come in) return, and force  
 67 Their scanted courtesy.

LEAR My wits begin to turn.  
 Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy ? Art cold ?  
 I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow ?  
 70 The art of our necessities is strange,  
 And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.  
 Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart

46 *horrid* horrible 48 *carry* bear 50 *pudder* turmoil 51 *Find . . . enemies*  
 i.e. discover sinners (by their show of fear) 54 *simular* counterfeit 56  
*seeming* hypocrisy 57 *practiced on* plotted against; *Close* secret 58 *Rive*  
 split, break through; *continents* containers, covers 59 *summoners* arresting  
 officers of ecclesiastical courts; *grace* mercy 61 *Gracious my lord* my  
 gracious lord 63 *house* household (both building and occupants) 65  
*demanding after* inquiring for 67 *scanted* stinted 70 *art* magic skill (as in  
 alchemy)

That's sorry yet for thee.

FOOL [sings]

He that has and a little tiny wit,  
With, heigh-ho, the wind and the rain,  
Must make content with his fortunes fit  
Though the rain it raineth every day.

LEAR True, boy. Come, bring us to this hovel.

*Exit [with Kent].*

FOOL This is a brave night to cool a courtesan. I'll speak a prophecy ere I go : 79

When priests are more in word than matter ; 81  
When brewers mar their malt with water ; 82  
When nobles are their tailors' tutors, 83  
No heretics burned, but wenches' suitors ; 84  
When every case in law is right,  
No squire in debt nor no poor knight ;  
When slanders do not live in tongues,  
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs ;  
When usurers tell their gold i' th' field, 89  
And bawds and whores do churches build –  
Then shall the realm of Albion 91  
Come to great confusion. 92  
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,  
That going shall be used with feet. 94

This prophecy Merlin shall make, for I live before his time. 95

*Exit.*

■

76 *make . . . fit* i.e. reconcile himself to his fortunes 79 *brave* fine 81  
are . . . *matter* i.e. can outshine the gospel message (At present their ability  
to speak is quite unworthy of their theme.) 82 *mar* i.e. dilute (At present  
they dilute water with malt, producing very small beer.) 83 *are . . . tutors*  
i.e. are no longer subservient to fashion (Each subsequent line also reverses  
the present state of affairs.) 84 *burned* (pun on contracting venereal  
disease); *wenches' suitors* i.e. libertines 89 *tell* count; *i' th' field* (instead  
of in secret places) 91 *Albion* England 92 *confusion* ruin (ironic: an  
edifice of abuses is 'ruined' by reform) 94 *going . . . feet* walking will  
be done with feet (the humor of anticlimax, but suggesting a return to  
normality) 95 *Merlin* (a legendary magician associated with King Arthur,  
who reigned later than King Lear)

III, iii      *Enter Gloucester and Edmund.*

GLOUCESTER Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might  
 3 pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house, charged me on pain of perpetual displeasure neither to  
 5 speak of him, entreat for him, or any way sustain him.

EDMUND Most savage and unnatural.

7 GLOUCESTER Go to; say you nothing. There is division  
 8 between the Dukes, and a worse matter than that. I have received a letter this night – 'tis dangerous to be spoken  
 10 – I have locked the letter in my closet. These injuries the  
 11 King now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a  
 12 power already footed; we must incline to the King. I will  
 13 look him and privily relieve him. Go you and maintain  
 talk with the Duke, that my charity be not of him perceived. If he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. If I die  
 17 for it, as no less is threatened me, the King my old master  
 must be relieved. There is strange things toward,  
 Edmund; pray you be careful.

*Exit.*

EDMUND

19 This courtesy forbid thee shall the Duke  
 Instantly know, and of that letter too.  
 21 This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me  
 That which my father loses – no less than all.  
 The younger rises when the old doth fall.

*Exit.*

III, iv      *Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.*

KENT

1 Here is the place, my lord. Good my lord, enter.  
 The tyranny of the open night's too rough

III, iii Within Gloucester's castle 3 *pity* have mercy upon 5 *entreat*  
 plead 7 *division* contention 8 *worse* more serious 10 *closet* chamber  
 11 *home* thoroughly 12 *power* army; *footed* landed; *incline to* side with  
 13 *look* search for; *privily* secretly 17 *toward* imminent 19 *courtesy* kind  
 attention (to Lear) 21 *fair deserving* i.e. action that should win favor  
 III, iv Before a hovel on the heath 1 *Good my lord* my good lord

For nature to endure.

*Storm still.*

LEAR

Let me alone.

KENT

Good my lord, enter here.

LEAR

Wilt break my heart ?

KENT

I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

LEAR

Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm  
Invades us to the skin. So 'tis to thee,  
But where the greater malady is fixed  
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear ;  
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,  
Thou'dst meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the mind 's  
free,

The body 's delicate. The tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else  
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude,  
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand  
For lifting food to't ? But I will punish home.  
No, I will weep no more. In such a night  
To shut me out ! Pour on ; I will endure.  
In such a night as this ! O Regan, Goneril,  
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all –  
O, that way madness lies ; let me shun that.  
No more of that.

KENT Good my lord, enter here.

LEAR

Prithee go in thyself ; seek thine own ease.  
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder  
On things would hurt me more, but I'll go in.

*[To the Fool]*

In, boy ; go first. You houseless poverty –

26

4 break my heart i.e. by removing the distraction of mere physical distress

8 fixed lodged 11 i' th' mouth i.e. in the teeth ; free free of care 16 home

i.e. to the hilt 20 frank liberal 26 houseless unsheltered

Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep. *Exit [Fool].*  
 Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
 31 Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you  
 From seasons such as these ? O, I have ta'en  
 33 Too little care of this ! Take physic, pomp ;  
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
 35 That thou mayst shake the superflux to them  
 And show the heavens more just.

37 EDGAR [within] Fathom and half, fathom and half ! Poor Tom !

*Enter Fool.*

FOOL Come not in here, nuncle ; here's a spirit. Help me, help me !

KENT

Give me thy hand. Who's there ?

FOOL A spirit, a spirit. He says his name 's poor Tom.

KENT

What art thou that dost grumble there i' th' straw ?

Come forth.

*Enter Edgar [as Tom o' Bedlam].*

45 EDGAR Away ! the foul fiend follows me. Through the  
 46 sharp hawthorn blow the winds. Humh ! go to thy bed  
 and warm thee.

LEAR Didst thou give all to thy daughters ? And art thou  
 come to this ?

EDGAR Who gives anything to poor Tom ? whom the foul  
 fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through  
 ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire ; that hath  
 53 laid knives under his pillow and halters in his pew, set  
 54 ratsbane by his porridge, made him proud of heart, to

31 *looped* loopholed 33 *Take physic, pomp* i.e. cure yourself, you vain-glorious ones 35 *superflux* superfluities 37 *Fathom and half* (nautical cry in taking soundings, perhaps suggested by the deluge) 45-46 *Through . . . winds* (cf. ll. 93-94; a line from a ballad) 46-47 *go . . . thee* (evidently a popular retort; cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, Ind., i, 7-8) 53, 54 *knives* *halters, ratsbane* (temptations to suicide) 53 *pew* a gallery or balcony

ride on a bay trotting horse over four-inched bridges, to 55  
 course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits, 56  
 Tom 's acold. O, do, de, do, de, do, de. Bless thee from  
 whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking. Do poor Tom 58  
 some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I  
 have him now – and there – and there again – and there –

*Storm still.*

LEAR

Has his daughters brought him to this pass ? 61

Couldst thou save nothing ? Wouldst thou give 'em all ?

FOOL Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all 63  
 shamed.

LEAR

Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air 65

Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters ! 66

KENT

He hath no daughters, sir.

LEAR

Death, traitor ! Nothing could have subdued nature

To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.

Is it the fashion that discarded fathers

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh ? 71

Judicious punishment – 'twas this flesh begot

Those pelican daughters.

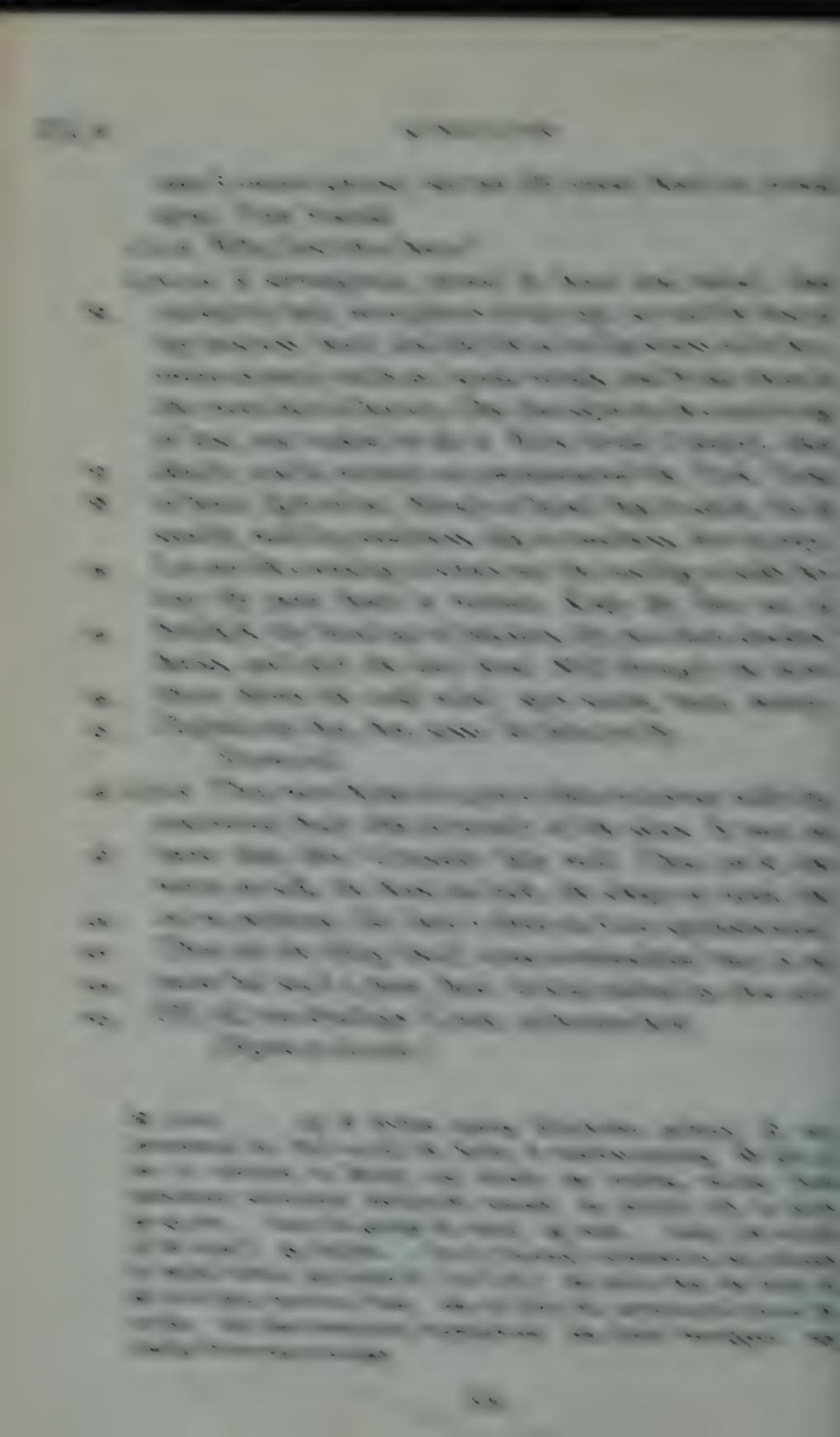
EDGAR Pillicock sat on Pillicock Hill. Alow, alow, loo, loo ! 74

FOOL This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

EDGAR Take heed o' th' foul fiend ; obey thy parents ;

keep thy words' justice ; swear not ; commit not with 77

55 *ride . . . bridges* i.e. take mad risks 56 *course . . . traitor* chase his own shadow as an enemy 58 *star-blasting* i.e. becoming the victim of malignant stars; *taking* pestilence 61 *pass* evil condition 63 *blanket* (to cover his nakedness) 65 *pendulous* ominously suspended 66 *Hang . . . faults* i.e. destined to chastise sins 71 *have . . . flesh* i.e. torture themselves 73 *pelican* i.e. feeding upon the parent's blood (a supposed habit of this species of bird) 74 *Pillicock . . . Hill* (probably from a nursery rhyme; 'Pillicock' is a pet name for a child); *Alow . . . loo* (hunting cry?) 77 *justice* i.e. dependability; *commit not* (i.e. adultery)





shirts to his body,

130      Horse to ride, and weapon to wear,  
But mice and rats, and such small deer,  
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

132      Beware my follower ! Peace, Smulkin, peace, thou fiend !

GLOUCESTER

What, hath your Grace no better company ?

EDGAR

The prince of darkness is a gentleman.

135      Modo he's called, and Mahu.

GLOUCESTER

Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile

137      That it doth hate what gets it.

EDGAR Poor Tom 's acold.

GLOUCESTER

139      Go in with me. My duty cannot suffer  
T' obey in all your daughters' hard commands.  
Though their injunction be to bar my doors  
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,  
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out  
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

LEAR

First let me talk with this philosopher.

What is the cause of thunder ?

KENT

Good my lord, take his offer ; go into th' house.

LEAR

148      I'll talk a word with this same learnèd Theban.

149      What is your study ?

EDGAR

150      How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

130 *deer game* (adapted from lines in the romance *Bevis of Hampton*) 132,  
135 *Smulkin, Modo, Mahu* (devils described in Harsnett's *Declaration*,  
1603) 137 *gets* begets (a reference to Edgar, Goneril, and Regan) 139  
*suffer* permit 148 *Theban* (an unexplained association of Thebes with  
philosophy, i.e. science) 149 *study* i.e. scientific specialty 150 *prevent*  
*thwart*

LEAR

Let me ask you one word in private.

KENT

Importune him once more to go, my lord.

His wits begin t' unsettle.

GLOUCESTER

Canst thou blame him ?

*Storm still.*

His daughters seek his death. Ah, that good Kent,  
He said it would be thus, poor banished man !

Thou sayest the King grows mad – I'll tell thee, friend,  
I am almost mad myself. I had a son,

Now outlawed from my blood ; he sought my life

158

But lately, very late. I loved him, friend,

No father his son dearer. True to tell thee,

The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night 's this !

I do beseech your Grace –

LEAR

O, cry you mercy, sir.

162

Noble philosopher, your company.

EDGAR Tom 's acold.

GLOUCESTER

In, fellow, there, into th' hovel ; keep thee warm.

LEAR

Come, let's in all.

KENT

This way, my lord.

LEAR

With him !

I will keep still with my philosopher.

KENT

Good my lord, soothe him ; let him take the fellow.

168

GLOUCESTER

Take him you on.

169

KENT

Sirrah, come on ; go along with us.

LEAR

Come, good Athenian.

171

158 outlawed . . . blood proscribed as no child of mine 162 cry you mercy  
I beg your pardon 168 soothe humor 169 you on along with you 171  
Athenian i.e. philosopher

## GLOUCESTER

No words, no words ! Hush.

173 EDGAR Child Rowland to the dark tower came ;

174 His word was still, 'Fie, foh, and fum,

I smell the blood of a British man.'

*Exeunt.*

III, v *Enter Cornwall and Edmund.*

CORNWALL I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

2 EDMUND How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature

3 thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

CORNWALL I now perceive it was not altogether your  
5 brother's evil disposition made him seek his death ; but a  
provoking merit, set a work by a reproveable badness in  
himself.

EDMUND How malicious is my fortune that I must repent  
to be just ! This is the letter which he spoke of, which  
10 approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of  
France. O heavens, that this treason were not ! or not I  
the detector !

CORNWALL Go with me to the Duchess.

EDMUND If the matter of this paper be certain, you have  
mighty business in hand.

CORNWALL True or false, it hath made thee Earl of  
Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be  
ready for our apprehension.

19 EDMUND [aside] If I find him comforting the King, it  
20 will stuff his suspicion more fully. — I will persevere in

173 *Child* (i.e. a candidate for knighthood); *Roland* Roland of the Charlemagne legends (the line perhaps from a lost ballad) 174 *His word was still* i.e. his repeated word, his motto, was always 174-75 *Fie . . . man* (absurdly heroic)

III, v Within Gloucester's castle 2 *censured* judged 3 *something fears me* frightens me somewhat 5-7 *a provoking . . . himself* i.e. evil justice incited by evil (a case of poison driving out poison) 10 *approves* proves; *intelligent . . . advantages* spying partisan on behalf 19 *comforting* aiding 20 *persever* persevere

my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

CORNWALL I will lay trust upon thee, and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. 22 23

*Exeunt.*

■

*Enter Kent and Gloucester.*

III, vi

GLOUCESTER Here is better than the open air ; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can. I will not be long from you.

KENT All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience. The gods reward your kindness.

*Exit [Gloucester].* 5

*Enter Lear, Edgar, and Fool.*

EDGAR Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

FOOL Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman.

10

LEAR

A king, a king.

FOOL No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son ; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

LEAR

To have a thousand with red burning spits

Come hizzing in upon 'em —

16

[EDGAR The foul fiend bites my back.

*22* blood natural feelings *23* lay . . . thee trust you (?), reward you with a place of trust (?)

III, vi Within a cottage near Gloucester's castle 5 impatience rage

6 Frateretto (a devil mentioned in Harsnett's *Declaration*); Nero (in Rabelais, Trajan was the angler, Nero a fiddler, in Hades) 7 innocent hapless victim, plaything 10 yeoman a property owner, next in rank to a gentleman (The allusion is to self-penalizing indulgence of one's children.)

13 sees i.e. sees to it 16 hizzing hissing (Lear is musing on vicious military retaliation)

FOOL He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

LEAR

20 It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.

[*To Edgar*]

Come, sit thou here, most learned justice.

[*To the Fool*]

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she-foxes -

23 EDGAR Look, where he stands and glares. Want'st thou

24 eyes at trial, madam?

25 Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

FOOL Her boat hath a leak,  
And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

EDGAR The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a  
30 nightingale. Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two  
31 white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food  
for thee.

KENT

33 How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed.

Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

LEAR

I'll see their trial first. Bring in their evidence.

[*To Edgar*]

Thou, robèd man of justice, take thy place.

[*To the Fool*]

And thou, his yokefellow of equity,

38 Bench by his side. [*to Kent*] You are o' th' commission;  
Sit you too.

EDGAR Let us deal justly.

20 *arraign* bring to trial 23 *he* Lear (?), one of Edgar's 'devils' (?) 24 *eyes* such eyes (?), spectators (?) 25 *bourn* brook (Edgar's line is from a popular song; the Fool's are a ribald improvisation) 30 *nightingale* i.e. the fool; *Hoppedance* (a devil mentioned in Harsnett's *Declaration* as 'Hobberdidance') 31 *white unsmoked* (in contrast with *black angel*, i.e. smoked devil) 33 *amazed* bewildered 38 *commission* those commissioned as King's justices

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd ?

Thy sheep be in the corn ;

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth

42

Thy sheep shall take no harm.

Purr, the cat is gray.

43

LEAR Arraign her first. 'Tis Goneril, I here take my oath  
before this honorable assembly, kicked the poor king  
her father.

FOOL Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril ?

LEAR She cannot deny it.

FOOL Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

51

LEAR

And here's another, whose warped looks proclaim  
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there !

Arms, arms, sword, fire ! Corruption in the place !  
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape ?]

54

EDGAR Bless thy five wits !

KENT

O pity ! Sir, where is the patience now  
That you so oft have boasted to retain ?

EDGAR [aside]

My tears begin to take his part so much  
They mar my counterfeiting.

59

60

LEAR

The little dogs and all,  
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart – see, they bark at me.

EDGAR Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs.

Be thy mouth or black or white,  
Tooth that poisons if it bite ;  
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,

42 corn wheatfield 43 one . . . mouth one strain on your delicate shepherd's pipe (?) 45 gray (gray cats were among the forms supposedly assumed by devils) 51 Cry . . . joint-stool (a cant expression for 'Pardon me for failing to notice you,' but two joint-stools – cf. warped, l. 52 – were probably the actual stage objects arraigned as Goneril and Regan) 54 Corruption . . . place i.e. bribery in the court 59 takes his part i.e. fall on his behalf 60 counterfeiting i.e. simulating madness

67 Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,  
 68 Or bobtail tike, or trundle-tail –  
     Tom will make him weep and wail ;  
     For, with throwing thus my head,  
 71      Dogs leaped the hatch, and all are fled.  
 72      Do, de, de, de. Sessa ! Come, march to wakes and fairs  
 73      and market towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

LEAR Then let them anatomize Regan. See what breeds  
 about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes  
 these hard hearts ? [to Edgar] You, sir, I entertain for  
 one of my hundred ; only I do not like the fashion of  
 78 your garments. You will say they are Persian ; but let  
 them be changed.

KENT

Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

LEAR

Make no noise, make no noise ; draw the curtains.

So, so. We'll go to supper i' th' morning.

FOOL And I'll go to bed at noon.

*Enter Gloucester.*

GLOUCESTER

Come hither, friend. Where is the King my master ?

KENT

Here, sir, but trouble him not ; his wits are gone.

GLOUCESTER

Good friend, I prithee take him in thy arms.

I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.

There is a litter ready ; lay him in't

And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master.

If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,

67 *brach* hound bitch; *lym* bloodhound 68 *bobtail* . . . *trundle-tail* short-tailed cur or long-tailed 71 *hatch* lower half of a 'Dutch door' 72 *Sessa* (interjection, equivalent to 'Away !'); *wakes* parish feasts 73 *Poor . . . dry* (Edgar expresses his exhaustion in his role, by an allusion to the horns proffered by Toms o' Bedlam in begging drink) 78 *Persian* (Persian costume was reputedly gorgeous. Ironically, or in actual delusion, Lear refers thus to Edgar's rags, as he refers to bed curtains in l. 81.)

With thine and all that offer to defend him,  
 Stand in assurèd loss. Take up, take up,  
 And follow me, that will to some provision  
 Give thee quick conduct.

94  
95

[KENT] Oppressèd nature sleeps.

This rest might yet have balmed thy broken sinews,  
 Which, if convenience will not allow,  
 Stand in hard cure.

96  
97  
98

[*To the Fool*] Come, help to bear thy master.

Thou must not stay behind.]

GLOUCESTER Come, come, away!

*Exeunt [all but Edgar].*

[EDGAR

When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
 We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
 Who alone suffers suffers most i' th' mind,  
 Leaving free things and happy shows behind ;  
 But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip  
 When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.  
 How light and portable my pain seems now,  
 When that which makes me bend makes the King bow.

100  
101  
103  
104  
105  
106

He childed as I fatherèd. Tom, away.

Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray  
 When false opinion, whose wrong thoughts defile thee,  
 In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.

109  
110  
111

What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the King !

112

Lurk, lurk.]

[*Exit.*]

113

\*

94 provision supplies 95 conduct guidance 96 balmed healed; sinews nerves 97 convenience propitious circumstances 98 Stand . . . cure will be hard to cure 100 our woes woes like ours 101 our foes i.e. our peculiar foes (they seem rather a part of universal misery) 103 free carefree; shows scenes 104 sufferance suffering 105 bearing fellowship enduring has company 106 portable bearable 109 Mark . . . noises i.e. heed the rumors concerning those in power (?); bewray reveal 110 wrong thoughts misconceptions 111 In . . . reconciles thee i.e. upon your vindication recalls you and makes peace with you 112 What . . . more whatever more happens 113 Lurk i.e. keep covered

III, vii

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, Bastard [Edmund], and Servants.*

CORNWALL *[to Goneril]* Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter. The army of France is landed. *[to Servants]* Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

*[Exeunt some Servants.]*

REGAN Hang him instantly.

GONERIL Pluck out his eyes.

CORNWALL Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep

7 you our sister company. The revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the Duke where you are going, to a most  
 10 festinate preparation. We are bound to the like. Our  
 11 posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell,  
 12 dear sister; farewell, my Lord of Gloucester.

*Enter Steward [Oswald].*

How now? Where's the King?

OSWALD

My Lord of Gloucester hath conveyed him hence.

Some five or six and thirty of his knights,

16 Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;  
 Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,  
 Are gone with him toward Dover, where they boast  
 To have well-armèd friends.

CORNWALL

Get horses for your mistress.

*Exit [Oswald].*

GONERIL

Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

CORNWALL

Edmund, farewell.

*[Exeunt Goneril and Edmund.]*

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,

Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

*[Exeunt other Servants.]*

III, vii Within Gloucester's castle 7 bound required 10 festinate speedy  
 11 intelligent informative 12 Lord of Gloucester (as now endowed with  
 his father's title and estates) 16 questrists seekers

Though well we may not pass upon his life  
Without the form of justice, yet our power  
Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men  
May blame, but not control.

Enter Gloucester and Servants.

Who's there, the traitor?

REGAN

Ingrateful fox, 'tis he.

CORNWALL

Bind fast his corky arms.

28

GLoucester

What means your Graces? Good my friends, consider  
You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends.

CORNWALL

Bind him, I say.

[*Servants bind him.*]

REGAN Hard, hard! O filthy traitor.

GLoucester

Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

CORNWALL

To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find –

[*Regan plucks his beard.*]

GLoucester

By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done  
To pluck me by the beard.

REGAN

So white, and such a traitor?

GLoucester Naughty lady,  
These hairs which thou dost ravish from my chin  
Will quicken and accuse thee. I am your host.  
With robber's hands my hospitable favors  
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

36

38

39

40

CORNWALL

Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

41

23 *pass upon* issue a sentence against 25 *do a court'sy to* i.e. defer to, act in  
conformity with 28 *corky* (because aged) 36 *Naughty* evil 38 *quicken*  
come to life 39 *favors* features 40 *ruffle* tear at 41 *late of late*

REGAN

42 Be simple-answered, for we know the truth.

CORNWALL

And what confederacy have you with the traitors

44 Late footed in the kingdom?

REGAN

To whose hands you have sent the lunatic King.

Speak.

GLOUCESTER

47 I have a letter guessingly set down,

Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,

And not from one opposed.

CORNWALL

Cunning.

REGAN

And false.

CORNWALL

Where hast thou sent the king?

GLOUCESTER

To Dover.

REGAN

52 Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril -

CORNWALL

Wherefore to Dover? Let him answer that.

GLOUCESTER

54 I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

REGAN

Wherefore to Dover?

GLOUCESTER

Because I would not see thy cruel nails

Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister

58 In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.

The sea, with such a storm as his bare head

60 In hell-black night endured, would have buoyed up

42 *Be simple-answered* i.e. give plain answers 44 *footed* landed 47 *guessingly* i.e. tentatively, not stated as an assured fact 52 *charged at peril* ordered on peril of your life 54 *course* coursing (as by a string of dogs baiting a bear or bull tied in the pit) 58 *anointed* (as king) 60 *buoyed* surged

And quenched the stellèd fires.	61
Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.	62
If wolves had at thy gate howled that stern time,	
Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the key.'	64
All cruels else subscribe. But I shall see	65
The wingèd vengeance overtake such children.	66

CORNWALL

See't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.  
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

GLOUCESTER

He that will think to live till he be old,  
Give me some help. – O cruel ! O you gods !

REGAN

One side will mock another. Th' other too.

71

CORNWALL

If you see vengeance –

I. SERVANT Hold your hand, my lord !  
I have served you ever since I was a child ;  
But better service have I never done you  
Than now to bid you hold.

REGAN How now, you dog ?

I. SERVANT

If you did wear a beard upon your chin,  
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean !

77

CORNWALL

My villain !

78

*[Draw and fight.]*

I. SERVANT

Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

61 *stellèd* starry 62 *holp* helped 64 *turn the key* i.e. let them come in to shelter 65 *All . . . subscribe* i.e. at such times all other cruel creatures give way, agree to renounce their cruelty (?) 66 *wingèd* heavenly (?), swift (?) 69 *will think* hopes, expects 71 *mock* i.e. subject to ridicule (because of the contrast) 77 *shake it* (as Regan has done with Gloucester's – an act of extreme defiance); *on this quarrel* in this cause; *What . . . mean* i.e. how dare you (The words are given to Regan by most editors, but they are no more 'un-servantlike,' than those which precede them.) 78 *My villain* i.e. my serf (with play on its more modern meaning)

REGAN

Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus?

[She takes a sword and runs at him behind,] kills him.

1. SERVANT

O, I am slain ! My lord, you have one eye left

82 To see some mischief on him. O !

CORNWALL

Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly.

Where is thy lustre now ?

GLOUCESTER

All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund ?

86 Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature

87 To quit this horrid act.

REGAN Out, treacherous villain ;

Thou call'st on him that hates thee. It was he

89 That made the overture of thy treasons to us ;

Who is too good to pity thee.

GLOUCESTER

91 O my follies ! Then Edgar was abused.

Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him.

REGAN

Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell

His way to Dover.

Exit [one] with Gloucester.

94 How is't, my lord ? How look you ?

CORNWALL

I have received a hurt. Follow me, lady.

Turn out that eyeless villain. Throw this slave

Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace.

Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm. Exeunt.

[2. SERVANT

I'll never care what wickedness I do,

If this man come to good.

3. SERVANT

If she live long,

82 mischief injury 86 nature natural feeling 87 quit requite, avenge; horrid horrible 89 overture disclosure 91 abused wronged 94 How look you i.e. how looks it with you, what is your condition

And in the end meet the old course of death,  
Women will all turn monsters.

101

## 2. SERVANT

Let's follow the old Earl, and get the bedlam  
To lead him where he would. His roguish madness  
Allows itself to anything.

104

[Exit.]

## 3. SERVANT

Go thou. I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs  
To apply to his bleeding face. Now heaven help him.

Exit.]

\*

Enter Edgar.

IV, i

## EDGAR

Yet better thus, and known to be contemned,  
Than still contemned and flattered. To be worst,  
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,  
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.  
The lamentable change is from the best ;  
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,  
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace :  
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst  
Owes nothing to thy blasts.

1

3

4

6

9

Enter Gloucester and an Old Man.

But who comes here ?

My father, poorly led ? World, world, O world !  
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,  
Life would not yield to age.

10

11

## OLD MAN

O my good lord,  
I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant,  
These fourscore years.

101 *meet . . . death* i.e. die a natural death 104-05 *His roguish . . . anything* i.e. his being an irresponsible wanderer allows him to do anything

IV, i A path leading from Gloucester's castle 1 *contemned* despised 3 *dejected* cast down, abased 4 *esperance* hope 6 *The worst . . . laughter* i.e. the worst extreme is the point of return to happiness 9 *nothing* i.e. nothing good (and hence he is free of debt) 10 *poorly* poor-like, i.e. like a blind beggar (?) 11-12 *But . . . age* i.e. were it not for your hateful mutability, we would never be reconciled to old age and death

GLOUCESTER

Away, get thee away. Good friend, be gone.

16 Thy comforts can do me no good at all;

17 Thee they may hurt.

OLD MAN

You cannot see your way.

GLOUCESTER

18 I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;  
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen20 Our means secure us, and our mere defects  
Prove our commodities. O dear son Edgar,

22 The food of thy abusèd father's wrath,

23 Might I but live to see thee in my touch  
I'd say I had eyes again!

OLD MAN

How now? Who's there?

EDGAR [aside]

O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at the worst'?

I am worse than e'er I was.

OLD MAN

'Tis poor mad Tom.

EDGAR [aside]

27 And worse I may be yet. The worst is not  
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

OLD MAN

Fellow, where goest?

GLOUCESTER

Is it a beggarman?

OLD MAN

Madman and beggar too.

GLOUCESTER

31 He has some reason, else he could not beg.

I th' last night's storm I such a fellow saw,

33 Which made me think a man a worm. My son

16 *comforts* ministrations 17 *hurt* do injury (since they are forbidden)  
 18 *want* need 20-21 *Our means . . . commodities* i.e. prosperity makes us  
 rash, and sheer affliction proves a boon 22 *food* i.e. the object fed upon;  
*abusèd* deceived 23 *in* i.e. by means of 27-28 *The worst . . . worst* (because  
 at the very worst there will be no such comforting thought) 31 *reason*  
 powers of reason 33-34 *My son . . . mind* (because it was actually he -  
 a natural touch)

Came then into my mind, and yet my mind  
Was then scarce friends with him. I have heard more  
since.

As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods ;  
They kill us for their sport.

EDGAR [aside] How should this be ?

Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,  
Ang'ring itself and others. – Bless thee, master.

GLOUCESTER

Is that the naked fellow ?

OLD MAN Ay, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

Then prithee get thee gone. If for my sake  
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or twain  
I' th' way toward Dover, do it for ancient love ;  
And bring some covering for this naked soul,  
Which I'll entreat to lead me.

OLD MAN Alack, sir, he is mad.

GLOUCESTER

'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind.  
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure.  
Above the rest, be gone.

OLD MAN

I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,  
Come on't what will.

Exit.

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah naked fellow –

EDGAR

Poor Tom 's acold. [aside] I cannot daub it further.

49

52

GLOUCESTER

Come hither, fellow.

EDGAR [aside]

And yet I must. – Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

36 *wanton* irresponsibly playful 39 *Ang'ring* offending 43 *ancient love*  
i.e. such love as formerly bound master and man (nostalgic) 46 *time's*  
*plague* i.e. malady characteristic of these times 47 *thy pleasure* as you  
please 49 *'parel/apparel* 52 *daub it* lay it on, act the part

GLOUCESTER

Know'st thou the way to Dover?

EDGAR Both stile and gate, horseway and footpath. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend. [Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once : of lust, as Obidicut ; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness ; Mahu, of stealing ; Modo, of murder ; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids and waiting women. So, bless thee, master.]

GLOUCESTER

Here, take this purse, thou whom the heavens' plagues  
 65 Have humbled to all strokes. That I am wretched  
 66 Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still !  
 67 Let the superfluous and lust-dited man,  
 68 That slaves your ordinance, that will not see  
 Because he does not feel, feel your pow'r quickly ;  
 So distribution should undo excess,  
 And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover ?

EDGAR Ay, master.

GLOUCESTER

73 There is a cliff, whose high and bending head  
 74 Looks fearfully in the confinèd deep.  
 Bring me but to the very brim of it,  
 And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear  
 With something rich about me. From that place  
 I shall no leading need.

EDGAR Give me thy arm.  
 Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt.



59 *Obidicut* Hoberdicut (a devil mentioned in Harsnett's *Declaration*, as are the four following) 60 *dumbness* muteness (Shakespeare identifies each devil with some form of possession) 61 *mopping and mowing* grimaces, affected facial expressions 65 *humbled to* reduced to bearing humbly 66 *happier* i.e. less wretched 67 *superfluous* possessed of superfluities; *lust-dited* i.e. whose desires are feasted 68 *slaves your ordinance* subordinates your injunction (to share) 73 *bending* overhanging 74 *in . . . deep* i.e. to the sea hemmed in below

KING LEAR

Enter Goneril, Bastard [Edmund], and Steward  
[Oswald].

IV, ii

GONERIL

Welcome, my lord. I marvel our mild husband  
Not met us on the way.

2

[To Oswald] Now, where's your master?

OSWALD

Madam, within, but never man so changed.  
I told him of the army that was landed :  
He smiled at it. I told him you were coming :  
His answer was, 'The worse.' Of Gloucester's treachery  
And of the loyal service of his son  
When I informed him, then he called me sot  
And told me I had turned the wrong side out.  
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him ;  
What like, offensive.

8

11

GONERIL [to Edmund] Then shall you go no further.

It is the cowish terror of his spirit,  
That dares not undertake. He'll not feel wrongs  
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way  
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother.  
Hasten his musters and conduct his pow'rs.  
I must change names at home, and give the distaff  
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant  
Shall pass between us. Ere long you are like to hear  
(If you dare venture in your own behalf)  
A mistress's command. Wear this. Spare speech.

12

13

14

16

17

21

[Gives a favor.]

Decline your head. This kiss, if it durst speak,  
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.

IV, ii Before Albany's palace 2 Not met has not met 8 sot fool 11  
What like what he should like 12 cowish cowardly 13 undertake engage  
14 an answer retaliation 14-15 Our wishes . . . effects i.e. our wishes, that  
you might supplant Albany, may materialize 16 musters enlistments;  
conduct his pow'rs lead his army 17 change names i.e. exchange the name of  
'mistress' for 'master'; distaff spinning-staff (symbol of the housewife)  
21 mistress's (at present she plays the role of master, but, mated with  
Edmund, she would again change names)

24 Conceive, and fare thee well.

EDMUND

Yours in the ranks of death.

*Exit.*

GONERIL

My most dear Gloucester.

O, the difference of man and man :

To thee a woman's services are due ;

28 My fool usurps my body.

OSWALD

Madam, here comes my lord.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Albany.*

GONERIL

29 I have been worth the whistle.

ALBANY

O Goneril,

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind

31 Blows in your face. [I fear your disposition :

That nature which contemns its origin

33 Cannot be borderèd certain in itself.

34 She that herself will sliver and disbranch

35 From her material sap, perforce must wither

And come to deadly use.

GONERIL

No more ; the text is foolish.

ALBANY

Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile ;

39 Filths savor but themselves. What have you done ?

Tigers not daughters, what have you performed ?

A father, and a gracious agèd man,

42 Whose reverence even the head-lugged bear would lick,

43 Most barbarous, most degenerate, have you maddened.

24 *Conceive* (1) understand, (2) quicken (with the seed I have planted in you) 28 *usurps* wrongfully occupies 29 *worth the whistle* i.e. valued enough to be welcomed home ('not worth the whistle' applying proverbially to a 'poor dog') 31 *fear your disposition* distrust your nature 33 *borderèd certain* safely contained (it will be unpredictably licentious) 34 *sliver, disbranch* cut off 35 *material sap* sustaining stock, nourishing trunk 39 *savor* relish 42 *head-lugged* dragged with a head-chain (hence, surly); *lick* i.e. treat with affection 43 *degenerate unnatural*; *maddened* maddened

Could my good brother suffer you to do it ?  
 A man, a prince, by him so benefited !  
 If that the heavens do not their visible spirits  
 Send quickly down to tame these vile offenses,  
 It will come,  
 Humanity must perforce prey on itself,  
 Like monsters of the deep.]

GONERIL Milk-livered man, 50  
 That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs ;  
 Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning 52  
 Thine honor from thy suffering ; [that not know'st  
 Fools do those villains pity who are punished 54  
 Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum ? 55  
 France spreads his banners in our noiseless land, 56  
 With plumèd helm thy state begins to threat, 57  
 Whilst thou, a moral fool, sits still and cries  
 'Alack, why does he so ?'] 58

ALBANY See thyself, devil :  
 Proper deformity seems not in the fiend 60  
 So horrid as in woman.

GONERIL O vain fool !

[ALBANY  
 Thou changèd and self-covered thing, for shame 62  
 Bemonster not thy feature. Were't my fitness 63  
 To let these hands obey my blood, 64  
 They are apt enough to dislocate and tear  
 Thy flesh and bones. Howe'er thou art a fiend,  
 A woman's shape doth shield thee.

46 *visible* made visible, material 48 *It* i.e. chaos 50 *Milk-livered* i.e. spiritless 52-53 *discerning* . . . *suffering* distinguishing between dishonor and tolerance 54 *Fools* i.e. only fools 55 *drum* i.e. military preparation 56 *noiseless* i.e. unaroused 57 *helm* war-helmet 58 *moral* moralizing 60 *Proper* i.e. fair-surfaced 62 *changèd* transformed (diabolically, as in witchcraft); *self-covered* i.e. your natural self overwhelmed by evil (?), devil disguised as woman (?) 63 *Bemonster* . . . *feature* i.e. do not exchange your human features for a monster's; *my fitness* fit for me 64 *blood* passion

GONERIL

68 Marry, your manhood – mew !]  
*Enter a Messenger.*

[ALBANY What news ?]

MESSENGER

71 O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall 's dead,  
Slain by his servant, going to put out  
The other eye of Gloucester.

ALBANY Gloucester's eyes ?

MESSENGER

73 A servant that he bred, thrilled with remorse,  
Opposed against the act, bending his sword  
To his great master ; who, thereat enraged,  
76 Flew on him, and amongst them felled him dead ;  
But not without that harmful stroke which since  
78 Hath plucked him after.ALBANY This shows you are above,  
79 You justicers, that these our nether crimes  
80 So speedily can venge. But, O poor Gloucester,  
Lost he his other eye ?

MESSENGER Both, both, my lord.

82 This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer.  
'Tis from your sister.GONERIL *[aside]* One way I like this well ;  
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,  
85 May all the building in my fancy pluck  
86 Upon my hateful life. Another way  
87 The news is not so tart. – I'll read, and answer. [Exit.]

68 *Marry* (oath, derived from 'By Mary'); *your manhood – mew* i.e. 'What a man!' followed by a contemptuous interjection (?), *mew up* (contain) this display of manliness (?) 71 *going to* about to 73 *bred* reared; *thrilled with remorse* in the throes of pity 76 *amongst them* i.e. aided by the others 78 *plucked him after* drawn him along (to death) 79 *justicers* dispensers of justice; *nether crimes* sins committed here below 80 *venge* avenge 82 *craves* requires 85–86 *May . . . life* i.e. may make my life hateful by destroying my dream-castles 86 *Another way* the other way (alluded to in l. 83, probably the removal of Cornwall as an obstacle to sole reign with Edmund) 87 *tart* distasteful

ALBANY

Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

MESSENGER

Come with my lady hither.

ALBANY

He is not here.

MESSENGER

No, my good lord; I met him back again.

ALBANY

Knows he the wickedness?

MESSENGER

Ay, my good lord. 'Twas he informed against him,  
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment  
Might have the freer course.

ALBANY

Gloucester, I live

To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the King,  
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend.

Tell me what more thou know'st.

*Exeunt.*

90

[Enter Kent and a Gentleman.

IV, iii

KENT Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back  
know you no reason?

GENTLEMAN Something he left imperfect in the state, 3  
which since his coming forth is thought of, which imports 4  
to the kingdom so much fear and danger that his per- 5  
sonal return was most required and necessary. 6

KENT

Who hath he left behind him general?

GENTLEMAN The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

KENT Did your letters pierce the Queen to any demon- 9  
stration of grief?

90 back going back

IV, iii A meeting place at Dover 3 imperfect . . . state i.e. rift in affairs  
of state 4 imports means 5 fear uneasiness 6 most most urgently  
9 pierce goad

GENTLEMAN

Ay, sir. She took them, read them in my presence,  
 12 And now and then an ample tear trilled down  
 Her delicate cheek. It seemed she was a queen  
 14 Over her passion, who, most rebel-like,  
 Sought to be king o'er her.

KENT O, then it movèd her ?

GENTLEMAN

Not to a rage. Patience and sorrow strove  
 17 Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
 Sunshine and rain at once – her smiles and tears  
 19 Were like, a better way : those happy smilets  
 That played on her ripe lip seemed not to know  
 What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence  
 As pearls from diamonds dropped. In brief,  
 23 Sorrow would be a rarity most belovèd,  
 If all could so become it.

KENT Made she no verbal question ?

GENTLEMAN

Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of father  
 Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart ;  
 Cried 'Sisters, sisters, shame of ladies, sisters !  
 Kent, father, sisters ? What, i' th' storm i' th' night ?  
 29 Let pity not be believed !' There she shook  
 The holy water from her heavenly eyes,  
 31 And clamor moistened ; then away she started  
 To deal with grief alone.

KENT It is the stars,  
 33 The stars above us govern our conditions ;  
 34 Else one self mate and make could not beget  
 35 Such different issues. You spoke not with her since ?

12 *trilled* trickled 14 *who* which 17 *goodliest* i.e. most becomingly 19  
 Were . . . *way* i.e. improved upon that spectacle 23 *rarity* gem 25-26  
 heaved . . . *forth* uttered . . . chokingly 29 *Let pity* let it for pity (?) 31  
*clamor moistened* i.e. mixed, and thus muted, lamentation with tears 33  
*govern our conditions* determine our characters 34 *Else . . . make* otherwise  
 the same husband and wife 35 *issues* children

GENTLEMAN No.

KENT

Was this before the King returned ?

GENTLEMAN

No, since.

KENT

Well, sir, the poor distressèd Lear 's i' th' town ;  
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers  
What we are come about, and by no means  
Will yield to see his daughter.

GENTLEMAN

Why, good sir ?

KENT

A sovereign shame so elbows him ; his own unkindness, 42  
That stripped her from his benediction, turned her 43  
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights  
To his dog-hearted daughters – these things sting 44  
His mind so venomously that burning shame  
Detains him from Cordelia.

GENTLEMAN

Alack, poor gentleman.

KENT

Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not ?

GENTLEMAN

'Tis so ; they are afoot.

49

KENT

Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear  
And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause 51  
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile.  
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve  
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you go  
Along with me.

*Exeunt.]*

\*

39 *better tune* i.e. more rational state, less jangled 42 *sovereign* overruling;  
*elbows* jogs 43 *stripped* cut off (cf. *disbranch*, IV, ii, 34); *benediction*  
blessing 44 *casualties* chances 49 'Tis so i.e. I have to this extent 51  
*dear cause* important purpose

## KING LEAR

IV, iv

*Enter, with Drum and Colors, Cordelia, Gentleman [Doctor], and Soldiers.*

CORDELIA

Alack, 'tis he ! Why, he was met even now  
As mad as the vexed sea, singing aloud,  
Crowned with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,  
With hardocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo flow'rs,  
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow  
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth !  
Search every acre in the high-grown field  
And bring him to our eye. [Exit an Officer.]

What can man's wisdom  
In the restoring his bereavèd sense ?  
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

DOCTOR

There is means, madam.  
Our foster nurse of nature is repose,  
The which he lacks. That to provoke in him  
Are many simples operative, whose power  
Will close the eye of anguish.

CORDELIA

All blessed secrets,

All you unpublished virtues of the earth,  
Spring with my tears ; be aidant and remediate  
In the good man's distress. Seek, seek for him,  
Lest his ungoverned rage dissolve the life  
That wants the means to lead it.

*Enter Messenger.*

MESSENGER

News, madam.

The British pow'rs are marching hitherward.

IV, iv A field near Dover 3 *fumiter* fumitory; *furrow weeds* (those that appear after ploughing?) 4 *hardocks* (variously identified as burdock, 'hoar dock,' 'harlock,' etc.) 5 *Darnel* tares; *idle* useless 6 *sustaining corn* life-giving wheat; *century* troop of a hundred men 8 *can* i.e. can accomplish 9 *bereavèd* bereft 10 *outward worth* material possessions 12 *foster* fostering 13 *provoke* induce 14 *simples operative* medicinal herbs, sedatives 16 *unpublished virtues* i.e. little-known benign herbs 17 *Spring* grow; *remediate* remedial 20 *wants* lacks; *means* i.e. power of reason; *lead it* govern it (the rage)

CORDELIA

'Tis known before. Our preparation stands  
In expectation of them. O dear father,  
It is thy business that I go about.

Therefore great France  
My mourning, and importuned tears hath pitied. 25  
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,  
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right. 26  
Soon may I hear and see him ! 27

*Exeunt.*

■

*Enter Regan and Steward [Oswald].*

IV, v

REGAN

But are my brother's pow'rs set forth ?

OSWALD Ay, madam.

REGAN

Himself in person there ?

OSWALD Madam, with much ado. 2  
Your sister is the better soldier.

REGAN

Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home ?

OSWALD No, madam.

REGAN

What might import my sister's letter to him ? 6

OSWALD I know not, lady.

REGAN

Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter. 8

It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,  
To let him live. Where he arrives he moves  
All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,  
In pity of his misery, to dispatch

25 *Therefore* therefor, because of that 26 *importuned* importunate 27  
*blown* swollen

IV, v At Gloucester's castle 2 *much ado* great bother 6 *import* bear as  
its message 8 *is posted* has sped 9 *ignorance* error

13 His nighted life ; moreover, to descriy  
The strength o' th' enemy.

OSWALD

I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

REGAN

Our troops set forth to-morrow. Stay with us.  
The ways are dangerous.

OSWALD I may not, madam.

18 My lady charged my duty in this business.

REGAN

Why should she write to Edmund ? Might not you  
20 Transport her purposes by word ? Belike,  
Some things – I know not what. I'll love thee much,  
Let me unseal the letter.

OSWALD Madam, I had rather –

REGAN

I know your lady does not love her husband,  
24 I am sure of that ; and at her late being here  
25 She gave strange eliads and most speaking looks  
26 To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

OSWALD I, madam ?

REGAN

I speak in understanding – y' are, I know't –  
29 Therefore I do advise you take this note :  
My lord is dead ; Edmund and I have talked,  
31 And more convenient is he for my hand  
32 Than for your lady's. You may gather more.  
33 If you do find him, pray you give him this ;  
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,  
35 I pray desire her call her wisdom to her.  
So fare you well.  
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,

13 *nighted* benighted, blinded 18 *charged* strictly ordered 20 *Transport her purposes* convey her intentions; *Belike* probably 24 *late* recently 25 *eliads* amorous glances 26 *of her bosom* in her confidence 29 *take this note* note this 31 *convenient* appropriate 32 *gather more* i.e. draw your own conclusions 33 *this* this word, this reminder 35 *call* recall

Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

38

OSWALD

Would I could meet him, madam ! I should show  
What party I do follow.

REGAN

Fare thee well.

*Exeunt.*

\*

*Enter Gloucester and Edgar.*

IV, vi

GLOUCESTER

When shall I come to th' top of that same hill ?

EDGAR

You do climb up it now. Look how we labor.

GLOUCESTER

Methinks the ground is even.

EDGAR

Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea ?

GLOUCESTER

No, truly.

EDGAR

Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect

By your eyes' anguish.

GLOUCESTER

So may it be indeed.

Methinks thy voice is altered, and thou speak'st  
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

EDGAR

Y' are much deceived. In nothing am I changed  
But in my garments.

GLOUCESTER

Methinks y' are better spoken.

EDGAR

Come on, sir ; here's the place. Stand still. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Halfway down

6

13

14

38 Preferment advancement

IV, vi An open place near Dover 6 anguish affliction 13 choughs jack-daws; midway i.e. halfway down 14 gross large

15 Hangs one that gathers sampire – dreadful trade ;  
 Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.  
 The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
 18 Appear like mice ; and yond tall anchoring bark,  
 19 Diminished to her cock ; her cock, a buoy  
 Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge  
 21 That on th' unnumb'red idle pebble chafes  
 Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,  
 23 Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
 24 Topple down headlong.

GLOUCESTER Set me where you stand.

EDGAR

Give me your hand. You are now within a foot  
 Of th' extreme verge. For all beneath the moon  
 27 Would I not leap upright.

GLOUCESTER Let go my hand.

Here, friend, 's another purse ; in it a jewel  
 29 Well worth a poor man's taking. Fairies and gods  
 Prosper it with thee. Go thou further off ;  
 Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

EDGAR

Now fare ye well, good sir.

GLOUCESTER With all my heart.

EDGAR [aside]

33 Why I do trifle thus with his despair  
 Is done to cure it.

GLOUCESTER O you mighty gods !

[*He kneels.*]

This world I do renounce, and in your sights  
 Shake patiently my great affliction off.

37 If I could bear it longer and not fall

15 *sampire* samphire (aromatic herb used in relishes) 18 *anchoring*  
 anchored 19 *Diminished* . . . *cock* reduced to the size of her cockboat 21  
*unnumb'red idle pebble* i.e. barren reach of countless pebbles 23 *the deficient sight* i.e. my dizziness 24 *Topple* topple me 27 *upright* i.e. even  
 upright, let alone forward 29 *Fairies* (the usual wardens of treasure) 33  
*Why . . . trifle* i.e. the reason I toy with (*done* in l. 34 being redundant)  
 37-38 *fall . . . with* i.e. rebel against (irreligiously)

To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and loathèd part of nature should  
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O bless him !  
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

[He falls forward and swoons.]

And yet I know not how conceit may rob  
The treasury of life when life itself  
Yields to the theft. Had he been where he thought,  
By this had thought been past. Alive or dead ?  
Ho you, sir ! Friend ! Hear you, sir ? Speak !  
Thus might he pass indeed. Yet he revives.  
What are you, sir ?

**GLOUCESTER** Away, and let me die.

EDGAR

Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,  
So many fathom down precipitating,  
Thou'dst shivered like an egg ; but thou dost breathe,  
Hast heavy substance, bleed'st not, speak'st, art sound.  
Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell.  
Thy life 's a miracle. Speak yet again.

## GLOUCESTER

But have I fall'n, or no?

EDGAR

From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.  
Look up a-height. The shrill-gorged lark so far  
Cannot be seen or heard. Do but look up.

## GLOUCESTER

Alack, I have no eyes.  
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit  
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort

38 opposeless not to be opposed 39 *My snuff* . . . nature i.e. the guttering and hateful tag end of my life 42 conceit imagination 44 Yields to i.e. welcomes 50 precipitating falling 53 at each end to end 55 life survival 57 bourn boundary, headland 58 a-height on high; gorged throated

63 When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage  
And frustrate his proud will.

EDGAR Give me your arm.

65 Up—so. How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

GLOUCESTER

Too well, too well.

EDGAR This is above all strangeness.

Upon the crown o' th' cliff what thing was that  
Which parted from you?

GLOUCESTER A poor unfortunate beggar.

EDGAR

As I stood here below, methought his eyes  
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,

71 Horns whelked and waved like the enridgèd sea.

72 It was some fiend. Therefore, thou happy father,

73 Think that the clearest gods, who make them honors  
Of men's impossibilities, have preservèd thee.

GLOUCESTER

I do remember now. Henceforth I'll bear  
Affliction till it do cry out itself  
'Enough, enough, and die.' That thing you speak of,  
I took it for a man. Often 'twould say  
'The fiend, the fiend'—he led me to that place.

EDGAR

80 Bear free and patient thoughts.

*Enter Lear [mad, bedecked with weeds].*

But who comes here?

81 The safer sense will ne'er accommodate

82 His master thus.

83 LEAR No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the  
King himself.

63 *beguile* outwit 65 *Feel* test 71 *whelked* corrugated; *enridgèd* blown  
into ridges 72 *happy father* lucky old man 73 *clearest* purest 73–74  
*who . . . impossibilities* i.e. whose glory it is to do for man what he cannot do  
for himself 80 *free* (of despair) 81 *safer* saner; *accommodate* accoutre  
82 *His* its 83 *touch* i.e. interfere with; *coining* minting coins (a royal  
prerogative)

EDGAR

O thou side-piercing sight !

LEAR Nature 's above art in that respect. There's your 86  
 press money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow- 87  
 keeper. Draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse ! 88  
 Peace, peace ; this piece of toasted cheese will do't. 89  
 There's my gauntlet ; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up 90  
 the brown bills. O, well flown, bird. I' th' clout, i' th' 91  
 clout – hewgh ! Give the word. 92

EDGAR Sweet marjoram.

93

LEAR Pass.

GLOUCESTER

I know that voice.

LEAR Ha ! Goneril with a white beard ? They flattered me  
 like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard 97  
 ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to 98  
 everything that I said ! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good 99  
 divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the  
 wind to make me chatter ; when the thunder would not  
 peace at my bidding ; there I found 'em, there I smelt  
 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words. They  
 told me I was everything. 'Tis a lie – I am not ague-proof. 104

GLOUCESTER

The trick of that voice I do well remember.

105

86 *Nature . . . respect* i.e. a born king is above a made king in legal immunity (cf. the coeval debate on the relative merits of poets of nature, i.e. born, and poets of art, i.e. made by self-effort) 87 *press money* i.e. the 'king's shilling' (token payment on military impressment or enlistment) 87-88 *crow-keeper* i.e. farmhand warding off crows 88 *clothier's yard* i.e. arrow (normally a yard long) 90 *gauntlet* armored glove (hurled as challenge); *prove it on* maintain it against 91 *brown bills* varnished halberds; *well flown* (hawking cry); *clout* bull's-eye (archery term) 92 *word* password 93 *Sweet marjoram* (herb, associated with treating madness?) 97 *like a dog* i.e. fawningly; *I . . . beard* i.e. I was wise 98 *To say . . . 'no'* i.e. to agree 99-100 *no good divinity* i.e. bad theology (For 'good divinity' cf. 2 Corinthians i, 18: 'But as God is true, our word to you was not yea and nay'; also Matthew v, 36-37, James v, 12.) 104 *ague-proof* proof against chills and fever 105 *trick* peculiarity

Is't not the King ?

LEAR Ay, every inch a king.

When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.

108 I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause ?

Adultery ?

Thou shalt not die. Die for adultery ? No.

The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly

112 Does lecher in my sight.

Let copulation thrive ; for Gloucester's bastard son

Was kinder to his father than my daughters

115 Got 'tween the lawful sheets.

116 To't, luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.

Behold yond simp'ring dame,

118 Whose face between her forks presages snow,

119 That minces virtue, and does shake the head

120 To hear of pleasure's name.

121 The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't

With a more riotous appetite.

123 Down from the waist they are Centaurs,

Though women all above.

125 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,

Beneath is all the fiend's.

There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous

129 pit ; burning, scalding, stench, consumption. Fie, fie,

fie ! pah, pah ! Give me an ounce of civet ; good apothecary,

sweeten my imagination ! There's money for thee.

GLOUCESTER

O, let me kiss that hand.

132 LEAR Let me wipe it first ; it smells of mortality.

108 *cause* case 112 *lecher* copulate 115 *Got* begotten 116 *luxury* lechery; *for . . . soldiers* (and therefore a higher birth rate) 118 *Whose . . . snow* i.e. whose face (mien) presages snow (frigidity) between her forks (legs) 119 *minces* mincingly affects 120 *pleasure's name* i.e. the very name of sexual indulgence 121 *fitchew* polecat, prostitute; *soiled* pastured 123 *Centaurs* (lustful creatures of mythology, half-human and half-beast) 125 *girdle* waist; *inherit* possess 129 *civet* musk perfume 132 *mortality* death

GLOUCESTER

O ruined piece of nature ; this great world  
 Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me ?

133

LEAR I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou  
 squiny at me ? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid ; I'll not  
 love. Read thou this challenge ; mark but the penning of it.

136

GLOUCESTER

Were all thy letters suns, I could not see.

EDGAR [aside]

I would not take this from report – it is,  
 And my heart breaks at it.

139

LEAR Read.

GLOUCESTER

What, with the case of eyes ?

142

LEAR O, ho, are you there with me ? No eyes in your head,  
 nor no money in your purse ? Your eyes are in a heavy  
 case, your purse in a light ; yet you see how this world  
 goes.

143

145

GLOUCESTER

I see it feelingly.

147

LEAR What, art mad ? A man may see how this world goes  
 with no eyes. Look with thine ears. See how yond justice  
 rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in thine ear : change  
 places and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is  
 the thief ? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar ?

150

151

GLOUCESTER Ay, sir.

LEAR And the creature run from the cur. There thou  
 mightst behold the great image of authority – a dog 's  
 obeyed in office.

155

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand !

157

133–34 *this . . . naught* i.e. the universe (macrocosm) will decay like this man (microcosm) (cf. III, i, 10n.) 136 *squiny* squint 139 *take accept*  
 142 *case* sockets 143 *are . . . me* is that the situation 145 *case* plight (pun)  
 147 *feelingly* (1) only by touch, (2) by feeling pain 150 *simple* mere 151  
*handy-dandy* (old formula used in the child's game of choosing which hand) 155 *great image* universal symbol 155–56 *a dog's . . . office* i.e.  
 man bows to authority regardless of who exercises it 157 *beadle* parish  
 constable

Why dost thou lash that whore ? Strip thy own back.

159 Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind

160 For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the  
cozener.

161 Through tattered clothes small vices do appear ;  
Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

163 And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks ;

164 Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.

165 None does offend, none – I say none ! I'll able 'em.

166 Take that of me, my friend, who have the power  
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes

168 And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now !

Pull off my boots. Harder, harder ! So.

EDGAR

171 O, matter and impertinency mixed ;  
Reason in madness.

LEAR

If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.  
I know thee well enough ; thy name is Gloucester.  
Thou must be patient. We came crying hither ;  
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air  
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee. Mark.

GLoucester

Alack, alack the day.

LEAR

When we are born, we cry that we are come

180 To this great stage of fools. – This' a good block.

181 It were a delicate stratagem to shoe

182 A troop of horse with felt. I'll put't in proof,

159 *lusts* wish (suggestive form of 'lists'); *kind* i.e. same act 160 *The usurer* . . . *cozener* i.e. the great cheat, some moneylending judge, sentences to death the little cheat 161 *appear* show plainly 163 *hurtless* without hurting 164 *Arm* . . . *rags* i.e. armored (cf. *Plate*, l. 162) only in rags 165 *able* authorize 166 *that* (i.e. the assurance of immunity) 168 *scurvy politician* vile opportunist 171 *matter and impertinency* sense and nonsense 180 *block* felt hat (?) 181 *delicate* subtle 182 *in proof* to the test

And when I have stol'n upon these son-in-laws,  
Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill !

*Enter a Gentleman [with Attendants].*

**GENTLEMAN**

O, here he is ! Lay hand upon him. – Sir,  
Your most dear daughter –

**LEAR**

No rescue ? What, a prisoner ? I am even  
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well ;  
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons ;  
I am cut to th' brains.

188

190

**GENTLEMAN** You shall have anything.

**LEAR**

No seconds ? All myself ?  
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,  
To use his eyes for garden waterpots,  
[Ay, and laying autumn's dust.] I will die bravely,  
Like a smug bridegroom. What, I will be jovial !  
Come, come, I am a king ; masters, know you that ?

192

195

**GENTLEMAN**

You are a royal one, and we obey you.

**LEAR** Then there's life in't. Come, an you get it, you shall 198  
get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa ! 199

*Exit [running, followed by Attendants].*

**GENTLEMAN**

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,  
Past speaking of in a king. Thou hast one daughter  
Who redeems Nature from the general curse  
Which twain have brought her to.

202

203

**EDGAR**

Hail, gentle sir.

188 *natural fool* born plaything 190 *cut* wounded 192 *salt* i.e. all tears  
195 *smug bridegroom* spruce bridegroom (the image suggested by the  
secondary meaning of *bravely*, i.e. handsomely, and the sexual suggestion  
of *will die*) 198 *life* (and therefore 'hope') 199 *Sa . . . sa* (hunting and  
rallying cry) 202 *general curse* universal condemnation 203 *twain* i.e.  
the other two

204 GENTLEMAN Sir, speed you. What's your will ?

EDGAR

205 Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward ?

GENTLEMAN

206 Most sure and vulgar. Every one hears that  
Which can distinguish sound.

EDGAR But, by your favor,  
How near's the other army ?

GENTLEMAN

209 Near and on speedy foot. The main descry  
Stands on the hourly thought.

EDGAR I thank you, sir. That's all.

GENTLEMAN

Though that the Queen on special cause is here,  
Her army is moved on.

EDGAR I thank you, sir. *Exit [Gentleman].*

GLOUCESTER

You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me ;  
214 Let not my worser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please.

EDGAR Well pray you, father.

GLOUCESTER

Now, good sir, what are you ?

EDGAR

217 A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows,  
218 Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,  
219 Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand ;  
220 I'll lead you to some biding.

GLOUCESTER Hearty thanks.

221 The bounty and the benison of heaven  
To boot, and boot.

204 *speed* God speed 205 *toward* impending 206 *sure and vulgar* com-  
monly known certainty 209 *on speedy foot* rapidly marching 209-10  
*main . . . thought* sight of the main body is expected hourly 214 *worser*  
*spirit* i.e. bad angel 217 *tame* submissive 218 *art . . . sorrows* i.e. lesson of  
sorrows painfully experienced 219 *pregnant* prone 220 *biding* biding  
place 221 *benison* blessing

Enter Steward [Oswald].

OSWALD	A proclaimed prize ! Most happy ;	222
	That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh	
	To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,	
	Briefly thyself remember. The sword is out	
	That must destroy thee.	225
GLoucester	Now let thy friendly hand	226
	Put strength enough to't.	
	<i>[Edgar interposes.]</i>	
OSWALD	Wherefore, bold peasant,	228
	Dar'st thou support a published traitor ? Hence,	
	Lest that th' infection of his fortune take	
	Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.	
EDGAR	Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casjon.	231
OSWALD	Let go, slave, or thou diest.	
EDGAR	Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor voke	233
	pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered out of my life, 'twould	234
	not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not	
	near th' old man. Keep out, che vore ye, or Ise try	236
	whether your costard or my ballow be the harder. Chill	237
	be plain with you.	
OSWALD	Out, dunghill !	
	<i>[They fight.]</i>	
EDGAR	Chill pick your teeth, zir. Come. No matter vor	240
	your foins.	241
	<i>[Oswald falls.]</i>	
OSWALD	Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my purse.	242

222 proclaimed prize i.e. one with a price on his head; happy lucky 223  
framed flesh born, created 225 thyself remember i.e. pray, think of your soul  
226 friendly i.e. unconsciously befriending 228 published proclaimed 231  
Chill I'll (rustic dialect); vurther 'casion further occasion 233 gait way;  
voke folk 234 An chud if I could; zwaggered swaggered, bluffed 236 che  
vore I warrant, assure; Ise I shall 237 costard head; ballow cudgel 240  
Chill pick i.e. I'll knock out 241 foins thrusts 242 Villain serf

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body,  
 244 And give the letters which thou find'st about me  
 To Edmund Earl of Gloucester. Seek him out  
 246 Upon the English party. O, untimely death !  
 Death !

[*He dies.*]

EDGAR

248 I know thee well. A serviceable villain,  
 249 As duteous to the vices of thy mistress  
 As badness would desire.

GLOUCESTER

What, is he dead ?

EDGAR

Sit you down, father ; rest you.  
 Let's see these pockets ; the letters that he speaks of  
 May be my friends. He's dead ; I am only sorry  
 254 He had no other deathsman. Let us see.  
 255 Leave, gentle wax and manners : blame us not  
 256 To know our enemies' minds. We rip their hearts ;  
 257 Their papers is more lawful.

*Reads the letter.*

'Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have  
 259 many opportunities to cut him off. If your will want not,  
 time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is noth-  
 262 ing done, if he return the conqueror. Then am I the  
 prisoner, and his bed my gaol ; from the loathed warmth  
 whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labor.

264 'Your (wife, so I would say) affectionate servant,  
 'Goneril.'

266 O indistinguished space of woman's will –  
 A plot upon her virtuous husband's life,  
 268 And the exchange my brother ! Here in the sands

244 letters letter; about upon 246 party side 248 serviceable usable 249  
 duteous ready to serve 254 deathsman executioner 255 Leave, gentle wax  
 by your leave, kind seal (formula used in opening sealed documents) 256  
 To know i.e. for growing intimate with 257 Their papers i.e. to rip their  
 papers 259 want not is not lacking 262 gaol jail 264 would wish to 266  
 indistinguished unlimited; will desire 268 exchange substitute

Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified  
 Of murderous lechers ; and in the mature time  
 With this ungracious paper strike the sight  
 Of the death-practiced Duke. For him 'tis well  
 That of thy death and business I can tell.

269  
 270  
 271  
 272

## GLOUCESTER

The King is mad. How stiff is my vile sense,  
 That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling  
 Of my huge sorrows ! Better I were distract ;  
 So should my thoughts be severed from my griefs,  
 And woes by wrong imaginations lose  
 The knowledge of themselves.

274  
 275  
 276  
 278

*Drum afar off.*

## EDGAR

Give me your hand.

Far off methinks I hear the beaten drum.  
 Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. *Exeunt.* 281

■

*Enter Cordelia, Kent, [Doctor,] and Gentleman.*

IV, vii

## CORDELIA

O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work  
 To match thy goodness ? My life will be too short  
 And every measure fail me.

## KENT

To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.  
 All my reports go with the modest truth ;  
 Nor more nor clipped, but so.

5  
 6

## CORDELIA

Be better suited.

These weeds are memories of those worser hours.  
 I prithee put them off.

7

*269 rake up* cover, bury *270 in the mature* at the ripe *271 strike* blast  
*272 death-practiced* whose death is plotted *274 stiff* obstinate; *vile sense*  
 i.e. hateful consciousness *275 ingenious feeling* i.e. awareness *276*  
*distract* distracted *278 wrong imaginations* i.e. delusions *281 bestow*  
*lodge*

IV, vii The French camp near Dover *5 go conform* *6 clipped* i.e. less  
 (curtailed); *suited* attired *7 weeds* clothes; *memories* reminders

KENT

Pardon, dear madam.

9 Yet to be known shortens my made intent.  
 10 My boon I make it that you know me not  
 11 Till time and I think meet.

CORDELIA

Then be't so, my good lord.

[*To the Doctor*] How does the King?

DOCTOR

Madam, sleeps still.

CORDELIA

O you kind gods,

15 Cure this great breach in his abusèd nature!  
 16 Th' untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up  
 17 Of this child-changèd father!

DOCTOR So please your Majesty  
 That we may wake the King? He hath slept long.

CORDELIA

Be governed by your knowledge, and proceed  
 20 I' th' sway of your own will. Is he arrayed?

*Enter Lear in a chair carried by Servants.*

GENTLEMAN

Ay, madam. In the heaviness of sleep  
 We put fresh garments on him.

DOCTOR

Be by, good madam, when we do awake him.  
 I doubt not of his temperance.

[CORDELIA

Very well.

[*Music.*]

DOCTOR

Please you draw near. Louder the music there.]

9 Yet . . . intent i.e. to reveal myself just yet would mar my plan 10 My boon . . . it the reward I ask is 11 meet proper 15 abusèd confused, disturbed 16 jarring discordant; wind up tune 17 child-changèd (1) changed to a child, (2) changed by his children (suggesting 'changeling,' wherein mental defect is associated with the malignancy of witches) 20 I' th' sway of according to

## CORDELIA

O my dear father, restoration hang  
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made. 28  
29

KENT Kind and dear princess.

## CORDELIA

Had you not been their father, these white flakes 30  
Did challenge pity of them. Was this a face  
To be opposed against the jarring winds ? 31  
[To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder ? 33  
In the most terrible and nimble stroke  
Of quick cross lightning to watch, poor perdu,  
With this thin helm ?] Mine enemy's dog, 35  
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
Against my fire ; and wast thou fain, poor father, 36  
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn  
In short and musty straw ? Alack, alack, 38  
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once  
Had not concluded all. - He wakes. Speak to him. 40

## DOCTOR

Madam, do you ; 'tis fittest.

## CORDELIA

How does my royal lord ? How fares your Majesty ?

LEAR

You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave.  
Thou art a soul in bliss ; but I am bound  
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
Do scald like molten lead.

CORDELIA Sir, do you know me?

28 harms wounds 29 reverence reverend person 30 flakes strands of hair  
31 challenge demand 33 deep dread-bolted deep-voiced and full of  
dreadful bolts 35 perdu (1) expendable outpost (military term), (2)  
lost one 36 helm military helmet; here, thin hair 38 fain glad 40  
short scanty (?), tramped to fragments (?) 47 wheel of fire (implement  
combining the tortures of breaking and burning, figuring in medieval  
visions of hell)

LEAR

You are a spirit, I know. Where did you die ?

CORDELIA

50 Still, still, far wide !

DOCTOR

He's scarce awake. Let him alone awhile.

LEAR

Where have I been ? Where am I ? Fair daylight ?

53 I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity  
To see another thus. I know not what to say.  
I will not swear these are my hands. Let's see –  
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured  
Of my condition.

CORDELIA O look upon me, sir,  
And hold your hand in benediction o'er me.  
You must not kneel.

LEAR Pray, do not mock me.

60 I am a very foolish fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less ;  
And, to deal plainly,  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.  
Methinks I should know you, and know this man ;  
Yet I am doubtful, for I am mainly ignorant  
What place this is ; and all the skill I have  
Remembers not these garments ; nor I know not  
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me ;  
For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

70 CORDELIA And so I am ! I am !

LEAR

Be your tears wet ? Yes, faith. I pray weep not.  
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.  
I know you do not love me ; for your sisters  
Have (as I do remember) done me wrong.  
You have some cause, they have not.

50 *wide* off the mark 53 *abused* confused

CORDELIA

No cause, no cause.

LEAR

Am I in France?

KENT

In your own kingdom, sir.

LEAR

Do not abuse me.

DOCTOR

77

Be comforted, good madam. The great rage  
 You see is killed in him ; [and yet it is danger  
 To make him even o'er the time he has lost.]  
 Desire him to go in. Trouble him no more  
 Till further settling.

80

82

CORDELIA

Will't please your Highness walk ?

LEAR

You must bear with me.

Pray you now, forget and forgive. I am old and foolish.

*Exeunt. [Manent Kent and Gentleman.]*

[GENTLEMAN Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain ?

KENT Most certain, sir.

GENTLEMAN Who is conductor of his people ?

KENT As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

GENTLEMAN They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

KENT Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about ; the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

93

GENTLEMAN The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare you well, sir.

*[Exit.]*

94

KENT

My point and period will be throughly wrought,

96

Or well or ill, as this day's battle 's fought.

*Exit.]*

97

\*

77 abuse deceive 80 even o'er fill in 82 settling calming 93 powers  
 armies 94 arbitrement decisive action 96 My point . . . wrought i.e. my  
 destiny will be completely worked out 97 Or either

V,i      *Enter, with Drum and Colors, Edmund, Regan,  
Gentleman, and Soldiers.*

## EDMUND

1 Know of the Duke if his last purpose hold,  
2 Or whether since he is advised by aught  
3 To change the course. He's full of alteration  
4 And self-reproving. Bring his constant pleasure.

[Exit an Officer.]

REGAN

5 Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

## EDMUND

6 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

REGAN

7 You know the goodness I intend upon you.  
Tell me, but truly – but then speak the truth –  
Do you not love my sister?

9 EDMUND

In honored love.

REGAN

11     But have you never found my brother's way  
      To the forfended place?

EDMUND

That thought abuses you.

REGAN

12 I am doubtful that you have been conjunct  
And bosomed with her, as far as we call hers.]

## EDMUND

No, by mine honor, madam.

REGAN

I never shall endure her. Dear my lord,  
Be not familiar with her.

## EDMUND

Fear me not

She and the Duke her husband !

V, i An open place near the British camp s.d. *Drum and Colors* drummer and standard-bearers 1 *Know* learn; *last purpose hold* most recent intention (i.e. to fight) holds good 2 *advised* induced 4 *constant pleasure* firm decision 5 *miscarried* met with mishap 6 *doubted* feared 7 *goodness* I intend boon I plan to confer 9 *honored* honorable 11 *forswore* forbidden; *abuses* deceives 12-13 *doubtful* . . . hers i.e. fearful you have been intimately linked with her both in mind and body



GONERIL

37 O ho, I know the riddle. – I will go.

*Exeunt both the Armies.**Enter Edgar.*

EDGAR [to Albany]

38 If e'er your Grace had speech with man so poor,  
Hear me one word.

ALBANY [to those departing]

I'll overtake you. [to Edgar] Speak.

EDGAR

Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.

41 If you have victory, let the trumpet sound  
For him that brought it. Wretched though I seem,  
43 I can produce a champion that will prove  
44 What is avouchèd there. If you miscarry,  
Your business of the world hath so an end,  
46 And machination ceases. Fortune love you.

ALBANY

Stay till I have read the letter.

EDGAR

I was forbid it.

When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,  
And I'll appear again.

ALBANY

50 Why, fare thee well. I will o'erlook thy paper.

*Exit [Edgar].**Enter Edmund.*

EDMUND

51 The enemy's in view ; draw up your powers.  
52 Here is the guess of their true strength and forces  
53 By diligent discovery ; but your haste  
Is now urged on you.

54 ALBANY

We will greet the time.

*Exit.*

37 *riddle* (i.e. the reason for Regan's strange demand) 38 *had speech* i.e. has condescended to speak 41 *sound* sound a summons 43 *prove* (in trial by combat) 44 *avouchèd* charged 46 *machination* i.e. all plots and counterplots 50 *o'erlook* look over 51 *powers* troops 52 *guess* estimate 53 *discovery* reconnoitering 54 *greet* i.e. meet the demands of

EDMUND

To both these sisters have I sworn my love ;  
 Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
 Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take ? 56  
 Both ? One ? Or neither ? Neither can be enjoyed,  
 If both remain alive. To take the widow  
 Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril ;  
 And hardly shall I carry out my side, 61  
 Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use  
 His countenance for the battle, which being done,  
 Let her who would be rid of him devise 63  
 His speedy taking off. As for the mercy  
 Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia –  
 The battle done, and they within our power,  
 Shall never see his pardon ; for my state  
 Stands on me to defend, not to debate. 68

Exit.



*Alarum within. Enter, with Drum and Colors, Lear, [held by the hand by] Cordelia ; and Soldiers [of France], over the stage and exeunt.* V, ii

*Enter Edgar and Gloucester.*

EDGAR

Here, father, take the shadow of this tree  
 For your good host. Pray that the right may thrive.  
 If ever I return to you again,  
 I'll bring you comfort.

GLOUCESTER

Grace go with you, sir.

Exit [Edgar].

4

*Alarum and retreat within. Enter Edgar.*

56 jealous suspicious 61 hardly . . . side with difficulty shall I play my part (as Goneril's lover, or as a great power in England?) 63 countenance backing 68-69 my state . . . debate i.e. my status depends upon my strength, not my arguments

V, ii An open place near the field of battle 4 s.d. *Alarum and retreat* (trumpet sounds, signalling the beginning and the ending of a battle)



And take upon 's the mystery of things  
As if we were God's spies ; and we'll wear out,  
In a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones  
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

**EDMUND** Take them away.

## LEAR

Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,  
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee ?  
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven  
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes.  
The goodyears shall devour them, flesh and fell,  
Ere they shall make us weep ! We'll see 'em starved first.  
Come. *Exeunt [Lear and Cordelia, guarded].*

EDMUND Come hither, captain; hark.

Take thou this note.

[*Gives a paper.*] Go follow them to prison.

One step I have advanced thee. If thou dost  
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way  
To noble fortunes. Know thou this, that men  
Are as the time is. To be tender-minded  
Does not become a sword. Thy great employment  
Will not bear question. Either say thou'l do't,  
Or thrive by other means.

**CAPTAIN** I'll do't, my lord.

EDMUND

About it ; and write happy when th' hast done.

35

Mark, I say instantly, and carry it so

As I have set it down.

16-17 *take . . . spies* i.e. contemplate the wonder of existence as it with divine insight, seek eternal rather than temporal truths 17 *wear out* outlast 18-19 *packs . . . moon* i.e. partisan and intriguing clusters of *great ones* who gain and lose power monthly 20-21 *Upon . . . incense* i.e. the gods themselves are the celebrants at such sacrificial offerings to love as we are 22-23 *He . . . foxes* i.e. to separate us, as foxes are smoked out and scattered, would require not a human but a heavenly torch 24 *goodears* (undefined forces of evil); *fell hide* 31 *as the time is* (i.e. ruthless in war) 32 *become befit* 33 *bear question* admit discussion 35 *write happy* consider yourself fortunate

[CAPTAIN

I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats –  
 If it be man's work, I'll do't.]

Exit

*Flourish. Enter Albany, Goneril, Regan, Soldiers.*

ALBANY

Sir, you have showed to-day your valiant strain,  
 And fortune led you well. You have the captives  
 Who were the opposites of this day's strife.  
 I do require them of you, so to use them  
 As we shall find their merits and our safety  
 May equally determine.

EDMUND

Sir, I thought it fit

To send the old and miserable King  
 To some retention [and appointed guard] ;  
 Whose age had charms in it, whose title more,  
 To pluck the common bosom on his side  
 And turn our impressed lances in our eyes  
 Which do command them. With him I sent the Queen,  
 My reason all the same ; and they are ready  
 To-morrow, or at further space, t' appear  
 Where you shall hold your session. [At this time  
 We sweat and bleed, the friend hath lost his friend,  
 And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed  
 By those that feel their sharpness.  
 The question of Cordelia and her father  
 Requires a fitter place.]

ALBANY

Sir, by your patience,

60 I hold you but a subject of this war,  
 Not as a brother.

REGAN

That's as we list to grace him.

Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded  
 Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers,

42 *opposites* of enemies in 44 *merits* deserts 47 *some . . . guard* detention  
 under duly appointed guards 49 *pluck . . . bosom* draw popular sympathy  
 50 *turn . . . eyes* i.e. make our conscripted lancers turn on us 53 *space*  
 interval 54 *session* trials 56 *best quarrels* worthiest causes 57 *sharpness*  
 i.e. painful effects 60 *subject of* subordinate in 61 *list to grace* please to  
 honor

Bore the commission of my place and person,		
The which immediacy may well stand up		65
And call itself your brother.		
<b>GONERIL</b>	Not so hot !	
In his own grace he doth exalt himself		
More than in your addition.		68
<b>REGAN</b>	In my rights	
By me invested, he compeers the best.		69
<b>ALBANY</b>	That were the most if he should husband you.	70
<b>REGAN</b>	Jesters do oft prove prophets.	
<b>GONERIL</b>	Holla, holla !	
That eye that told you so looked but asquint.		72
<b>REGAN</b>	Lady, I am not well ; else I should answer	
From a full-flowing stomach. General,		74
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony ;		75
Dispose of them, of me ; the walls is thine.		76
Witness the world that I create thee here		
My lord and master.		
<b>GONERIL</b>	Mean you to enjoy him ?	
<b>ALBANY</b>	The let-alone lies not in your good will.	79
<b>EDMUND</b>	Nor in thine, lord.	
<b>ALBANY</b>	Half-blooded fellow, yes.	80
<b>REGAN</b> <i>[to Edmund]</i>	Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.	81
<b>ALBANY</b>	Stay yet ; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee	

65 *immediacy* i.e. present status (as my deputy) 68 *your addition* honors conferred by you 69 *compeers* equals 70 *most* i.e. most complete investiture in your rights; *husband wed* 72 *asquint* cross-eyed, crookedly 74 *stomach* anger 75 *patrimony* inheritance 76 *walls is thine* i.e. you have stormed the citadel (myself) 79 *let-alone* permission 80 *Half-blooded* i.e. by birth only half noble 81 *Let . . . thine* i.e. fight and win for yourself my rights in the kingdom

83 On capital treason ; and, in thy attaint,  
This gilded serpent.

[*Points to Goneril.*] For your claim, fair sister,  
I bar it in the interest of my wife.

86 'Tis she is subcontracted to this lord,  
87 And I, her husband, contradict your banes.  
88 If you will marry, make your loves to me ;  
My lady is bespoke.

89 GONERIL An interlude !

ALBANY

Thou art armed, Gloucester. Let the trumpet sound.  
If none appear to prove upon thy person  
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
There is my pledge.

93 [*Throws down a glove.*] I'll make it on thy heart,  
94 Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less  
Than I have here proclaimed thee.

REGAN Sick, O sick !

GONERIL [*aside*]

96 If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

EDMUND

There's my exchange.

[*Throws down a glove.*] What in the world he is  
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.  
99 Call by the trumpet. He that dares approach,  
On him, on you, who not ? I will maintain  
My truth and honor firmly.

ALBANY

A herald, ho !

[EDMUND A herald, ho, a herald !]

83 *in thy attaint* i.e. as party to your corruption (cf. the *serpent* of Eden)  
86 *subcontracted* i.e. engaged, though previously married (sarcastic play on 'precontracted,' a legal term applied to one facing an impediment to marriage because previously engaged to another) 87 *contradict your banes* forbid your banns, i.e. declare an impediment 88 *loves* love-suits 89 *An interlude* a quaint playlet (equivalent to saying 'How dramatic!' or 'How comical!') 93 *make prove* 94 *nothing less* i.e. no respect less guilty 96 *medicine* i.e. poison 99 *trumpet* trumpeter

ALBANY

Trust to thy single virtue ; for thy soldiers,  
All levied in my name, have in my name  
Took their discharge.

103

REGAN My sickness grows upon me.

ALBANY

She is not well. Convey her to my tent.

[Exit Regan, attended.]

*Enter a Herald.*

Come hither, herald. Let the trumpet sound,  
And read out this.

[CAPTAIN Sound, trumpet !]

*A trumpet sounds.*

HERALD (*reads*) 'If any man of quality or degree within  
the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, sup-  
posed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor,  
let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet. He is  
bold in his defense.'

110

111

[EDMUND Sound !]

*First trumpet.*

HERALD Again !

*Second trumpet.*

Again !

*Third trumpet.*

*Trumpet answers within.*

*Enter Edgar, armed [at the third sound, a Trumpeter  
before him].*

ALBANY

Ask him his purposes, why he appears  
Upon this call o' th' trumpet.

HERALD What are you ?

Your name, your quality, and why you answer  
This present summons ?

EDGAR Know my name is lost,  
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit ;

122

103 single virtue unaided prowess 110 degree rank 111 lists muster

122 canker-bit eaten, as by the rose-caterpillar

Yet am I noble as the adversary  
I come to cope.

ALBANY                    Which is that adversary ?

EDGAR

What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester ?

EDMUND

Himself. What say'st thou to him ?

EDGAR                    Draw thy sword.

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice. Here is mine.

129                    Behold it is my privilege,  
The privilege of mine honors,  
My oath, and my profession. I protest –  
132                    Maugre thy strength, place, youth, and eminence,  
133                    Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,  
134                    Thy valor and thy heart – thou art a traitor,  
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father,  
136                    Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,  
137                    And from th' extremest upward of thy head  
138                    To the descent and dust below thy foot  
139                    A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'no,'  
140                    This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent  
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
Thou liest.

142 EDMUND    In wisdom I should ask thy name,  
But since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,  
144                    And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,  
145                    What safe and nicely I might well delay  
By rule of knighthood I disdain and spurn.  
147                    Back do I toss these treasons to thy head,

129–31 *it . . . profession* i.e. wielding this sword is the privilege of my knightly honor, oath, and function 132 *Maugre* in spite of 133 *fire-new* brand-new 134 *heart* courage 136 *Conspirant* in conspiracy 137 *extremest upward* uppermost extreme 138 *descent and dust* i.e. all that intervenes from the head to the dust 139 *toad-spotted* i.e. exuding venom like a toad 140 *bent* directed 142 *wisdom* prudence 144 *some say* some assay, i.e. proof (?), one might say (?) 145 *safe and nicely* cautiously and punciliously 147 *treasons* accusations of treason

With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart,  
Which – for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise –  
This sword of mine shall give them instant way  
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak !

*Alarums. Fight. [Edmund falls.]*

ALBANY

Save him, save him.

152

GONERIL This is practice, Gloucester.

By th' law of war thou wast not bound to answer  
An unknown opposite. Thou art not vanquished,  
But cozened and beguiled.

155

ALBANY Shut your mouth, dame,

Or with this paper shall I stop it. – Hold, sir. –

156

*[To Goneril]*

Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil.

No tearing, lady ! I perceive you know it.

GONERIL

Say if I do – the laws are mine, not thine.

159

Who can arraign me for't ?

ALBANY Most monstrous ! O,

Know'st thou this paper ?

GONERIL Ask me not what I know. *Exit.*

ALBANY

Go after her. She's desperate ; govern her.

162

*[Exit an Officer.]*

EDMUND

What you have charged me with, that have I done,

And more, much more. The time will bring it out.

'Tis past, and so am I. – But what art thou

That hast this fortune on me ? If thou'rt noble,

166

I do forgive thee.

148 *hell-hated* hateful as hell 149–51 *Which . . . ever* i.e. the accusations of treason, now flying about harmlessly, will be routed into you with my sword-thrust and lodge there permanently 152 *Save him* spare him (cf. l. 156); *practice* trickery 155 *cozened* cheated 156 *Hold* wait (If addressed to Edmund, this suggests a motive for the *Save him* of l. 152: i.e. Albany hopes to obtain a confession.) 159 *mine* (i.e. as ruler) 162 *govern* control 166 *fortune on* i.e. victory over

167 EDGAR Let's exchange charity.  
 I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund ;  
 169 If more, the more th' hast wronged me.  
 My name is Edgar and thy father's son.  
 171 The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
 Make instruments to plague us.  
 173 The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
 Cost him his eyes.

EDMUND Th' hast spoken right ; 'tis true.  
 175 The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.

ALBANY

176 Methought thy very gait did prophesy  
 A royal nobleness. I must embrace thee.  
 Let sorrow split my heart if ever I  
 Did hate thee, or thy father.

EDGAR Worthy prince, I know't.

ALBANY

Where have you hid yourself ?  
 How have you known the miseries of your father ?

EDGAR

By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale ;  
 And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst !  
 The bloody proclamation to escape  
 185 That followed me so near (O our lives' sweetness,  
 That we the pain of death would hourly die  
 Rather than die at once !) taught me to shift  
 Into a madman's rags, t' assume a semblance  
 189 That very dogs disdained ; and in this habit  
 190 Met I my father with his bleeding rings,  
 Their precious stones new lost ; became his guide,  
 Led him, begged for him, saved him from despair ;

167 *charity* forgiveness and love 169 *If more* if greater (since legitimate)  
 171 *of our pleasant* out of our pleasurable 173 *place* i.e. the bed of adultery ;  
*got* begot 175 *wheel* (of fortune); *here* (at its bottom) 176 *prophesy*  
 promise 185-86 *O . . . die* i.e. how sweet is life that we would prefer to  
 suffer death-pangs hourly 189 *habit* attire 190 *rings* sockets

Never – O fault ! – revealed myself unto him  
 Until some half hour past, when I was armed,  
 Not sure, though hoping of this good success,  
 I asked his blessing, and from first to last  
 Told him our pilgrimage. But his flawed heart –  
 Alack, too weak the conflict to support –  
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
 Burst smilingly.

194

197

EDMUND            This speech of yours hath moved me,  
 And shall perchance do good ; but speak you on –  
 You look as you had something more to say.

ALBANY

If there be more, more woeful, hold it in,  
 For I am almost ready to dissolve,  
 Hearing of this.

204

[EDGAR            This would have seemed a period  
 To such as love not sorrow ; but another,  
 To amplify too much, would make much more,  
 And top extremity.

205

206

Whilst I was big in clamor, came there in a man,  
 Who, having seen me in my worst estate,  
 Shunned my abhorred society ; but then, finding  
 Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms  
 He fastened on my neck, and bellowed out  
 As he'd burst heaven, threw him on my father,  
 Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him  
 That ever ear received ; which in recounting  
 His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life  
 Began to crack. Twice then the trumpets sounded,  
 And there I left him tranced.

209

210

217

219

ALBANY            But who was this ?

194 *armed* in armor   197 *our pilgrimage* of our journey; *flawed* cracked

204 *dissolve* melt into tears   205 *a period* the limit   206–08 *another . . .*

*extremity* i.e. another sorrow, too fully described, would exceed the limit

209 *big in clamor* loud in lamentation   210 *estate* state   217 *puissant*

powerful   219 *tranced* insensible

EDGAR

Kent, sir, the banished Kent ; who in disguise  
 221 Followed his enemy king and did him service  
 Improper for a slave.]

*Enter a Gentleman [with a bloody knife].*

GENTLEMAN

Help, help ! O, help !

EDGAR

What kind of help ?

ALBANY

Speak, man.

EDGAR

What means this bloody knife ?

224 GENTLEMAN 'Tis hot, it smokes.  
 It came even from the heart of – O, she's dead.

ALBANY

Who dead ? Speak, man.

GENTLEMAN

Your lady, sir, your lady ; and her sister  
 By her is poisonèd ; she confesses it.

EDMUND

229 I was contracted to them both. All three

230 Now marry in an instant.

EDGAR

Here comes Kent.

*Enter Kent.*

ALBANY

Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead.

*[Exit Gentleman.]*

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,  
 Touches us not with pity. – O, is this he ?

234 The time will not allow the compliment

235 Which very manners urges.

KENT

I am come

To bid my king and master aye good night.  
 Is he not here ?

221 *enemy* inimical 224 *smokes* steams 229 *contracted* engaged 230  
*marry* (i.e. in death) 234 *compliment* ceremony 235 *very manners* i.e.  
 sheer decency

ALBANY      Great thing of us forgot !  
 Speak, Edmund, where's the King ? and where's  
 Cordelia ?

237

*Goneril and Regan's bodies brought out.*

Seest thou this object, Kent ?

239

KENT

Alack, why thus ?

EDMUND      Yet Edmund was beloved.  
 The one the other poisoned for my sake,  
 And after slew herself.

240

ALBANY

Even so. Cover their faces.

EDMUND

I pant for life. Some good I mean to do,  
 Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send –  
 Be brief in it – to th' castle, for my writ  
 Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.  
 Nay, send in time.

244

246

ALBANY      Run, run, O run !

EDGAR

To who, my lord ? Who has the office ? Send  
 Thy token of reprieve.

249

EDMUND

Well thought on. Take my sword ;  
 Give it the captain.

EDGAR      Haste thee for thy life. [Exit Officer.]

EDMUND

He hath commission from thy wife and me  
 To hang Cordelia in the prison and  
 To lay the blame upon her own despair  
 That she fordid herself.

256

ALBANY

The gods defend her ! Bear him hence awhile.

[*Edmund is borne off.*]

237 *thing* matter; *of* by 239 *object* sight 240 *Yet* despite all 244 *pant for*  
*life* i.e. *gasp for* *life's* *breath* 246 *writ* i.e. *order of execution* 249 *office*  
*commission* 256 *fordid* *destroyed*

*Enter Lear, with Cordelia in his arms [, Gentleman, and others following].*

LEAR

Howl, howl, howl ! O, you are men of stones.  
 Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
 That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever.  
 I know when one is dead, and when one lives.  
 She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking glass.  
 263 If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
 Why then she lives.

264 KENT Is this the promised end ?

EDGAR

265 Or image of that horror ?

ALBANY

Fall and cease.

LEAR

This feather stirs ; she lives ! If it be so,  
 267 It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows  
 That ever I have felt.

KENT O my good master.

LEAR

Prithee away.

EDGAR 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

LEAR

A plague upon you murderers, traitors all ;  
 I might have saved her ; now she's gone for ever.  
 Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha,  
 What is't thou say'st ? Her voice was ever soft,  
 Gentle, and low – an excellent thing in woman.  
 I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee.

GENTLEMAN

'Tis true, my lords, he did.

LEAR

Did I not, fellow ?

277 I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion  
 I would have made them skip. I am old now,

263 stone i.e. glass 264 promised end i.e. doomsday 265 image duplicate;  
 Fall and cease i.e. strike once and for all, make an end of things 267  
 redeem atone for 277 falchion small sword slightly hooked

And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you ?	279
Mine eyes are not o' th' best, I'll tell you straight.	280
<b>KENT</b>	
If Fortune brag of two she loved and hated, One of them we behold.	281
<b>LEAR</b>	
This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent ?	283
<b>KENT</b>	The same :
Your servant Kent ; where is your servant Caius ?	284
<b>LEAR</b>	
He's a good fellow, I can tell you that. He'll strike, and quickly too. He's dead and rotten.	
<b>KENT</b>	
No, my good lord ; I am the very man.	
<b>LEAR</b>	
I'll see that straight.	288
<b>KENT</b>	
That from your first of difference and decay Have followed your sad steps.	289
<b>LEAR</b>	You are welcome hither.
<b>KENT</b>	
Nor no man else. All's cheerless, dark, and deadly. Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves, And desperately are dead.	291 292 293
<b>LEAR</b>	Ay, so I think.
<b>ALBANY</b>	
He knows not what he says ; and vain is it That we present us to him.	
<b>EDGAR</b>	Very bootless.
	295

279 *crosses* adversities; *spoil me* i.e. sap my strength 280 *tell you straight* admit (?), recognize you in a moment (?) 281 *two* (i.e. Lear, and a hypothetical second extreme example of Fortune's cruelty with whom he may be equated); *loved and hated* i.e. favored, then victimized 283 *sight* eyesight (instinctively Lear shuns the admission that he is dazed and weeping) 284 *Caius* (Kent's alias) 288 *see that straight* understand that in a moment 289 *difference and decay* change and decline in fortune 291 *Nor no man else* i.e. no, nor anyone else 292 *fordone* destroyed 293 *desperately* in a state of despair 295 *bootless* useless

*Enter a Messenger.*

MESSENGER

Edmund is dead, my lord.

ALBANY

That's but a trifle here.

298

You lords and noble friends, know our intent.

What comfort to this great decay may come

Shall be applied. For us, we will resign,

During the life of this old Majesty,

To him our absolute power ; [to Edgar and Kent] you to  
your rights,

302

With boot and such addition as your honors

Have more than merited. All friends shall taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes

The cup of their deservings. – O, see, see !

LEAR

306

And my poor fool is hanged : no, no, no life ?

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,

And thou no breath at all ? Thou 'lt come no more,

Never, never, never, never, never.

Pray you undo this button. Thank you, sir.

Do you see this ? Look on her ! Look her lips,

Look there, look there –

*He dies.*

EDGAR

He faints. My lord, my lord –

KENT

Break, heart, I prithee break !

EDGAR

Look up, my lord.

KENT

314 Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass ! He hates him

315 That would upon the rack of this tough world

Stretch him out longer.

EDGAR

He is gone indeed.

298 *What . . . come* i.e. whatever means of aiding this ruined great one presents itself 302 *boot* good measure; *addition* titles, advancement in rank 306 *fool* i.e. Cordelia ('Fool' was often a term of affection, and sometimes, as in Erasmus and elsewhere in Shakespeare, of praise – an ironic commentary upon self-seeking 'worldly wisdom.') 314 *Vex . . . ghost* do not trouble his departing spirit 315 *rack* instrument of torture

KENT

The wonder is he hath endured so long ;  
 He but usurped his life.

318

ALBANY

Bear them from hence. Our present business  
 Is general woe.

*[To Kent and Edgar]* Friends of my soul, you twain  
 Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

KENT

I have a journey, sir, shortly to go.  
 My master calls me ; I must not say no.

EDGAR

The weight of this sad time we must obey,  
 Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.  
 The oldest hath borne most ; we that are young  
 Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

324

*Exeunt with a dead march.*

318 *usurped* possessed contrary to (natural) law 324 *obey* i.e. accept

## APPENDIX: THE QUARTO TEXT

The present edition, as explained in the "Note on the text," adheres closely to the folio version of the play. The quarto version, although inferior in the main, is of great literary interest. The essential material for a comparison of the verbal features of the two versions is here supplied.

Mechanically, the quarto text is very defective : stage directions are often lacking and the speakers are confusingly designated ; the punctuation is bad ; and the verse is often printed as prose, the prose as verse. Omitted from the quarto but included in the folio are passages totalling approximately 100 lines, appearing in the present edition at the following points :

I, i, 40-45 *while . . . now* 49-50 *Since . . . state* 64-65 *and . . . rivers* 83-85 *to whose . . . interest* 88-89 *Nothing . . . Nothing* 162 *Dear sir, forbear*  
I, ii 107-12 *This villain . . . graves* 160-65 *I pray . . . brother*  
I, iv, 252 *Pray . . . patient* 265 *Of . . . you* 313-24 *This man . . . Oswald*  
II, iv, 6 *No, my lord* 21 *By Juno . . . ay* 45-53 *Winter's . . . year* 93-94 *Well . . . man* 98 *Are . . . blood* 135-40 *Say . . . blame* 291-92 *Whither . . . horse*  
III, i, 22-29 *Who have . . . furnishings*  
III, ii, 79-96 *This . . . time*  
III, iv, 17-18 *In . . . endure* 26-27 *In, boy . . . sleep* 37-38  
*Fathom . . . Tom*  
III, vi, 12-14 *No . . . him* 83 *And . . . noon*  
IV, i, 6-9 *Welcome . . . blasts*  
IV, ii, 25 *My . . . Gloucester*  
IV, vi, 162-67 *Plate . . . lips*  
V, ii, 11 *And . . . too*

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V, iii, 76 *Dispose . . . thine* 89 *An interlude* 145 *What . . . delay*  
 223 *Speak, man* 311-12 *Do . . . there*

On the other hand, included in the quarto but omitted from the folio are passages totalling approximately 283 lines – inserted in square brackets in the present edition at the following points:

I, i, 104 I, ii, 93-95, 140-47 I, iii, 16-20, 24-25 I, iv, 133-48,  
 222-25, 248, 295 II, i, 78 II, ii, 136-40, 146 II, iv, 18-19  
 III, i, 7-15, 30-42 III, vi, 17-55, 95-99, 100-13 III, vii, 99-  
 107 IV, i, 58-63 IV, ii, 31-50, 53-59, 62-68, 69 IV, iii, 1-55  
 IV, vi, 194 IV, vii, 24-25, 33-36, 79-80, 85-97 V, i, 11-13,  
 18-19, 23-28, 33 V, iii, 38-39, 47, 54-59, 102, 109, 115, 205-22.

In addition, the following words in the present edition represent insertions from the quarto: I, i, 214 *best* 289 *not* I, ii, 127 *Fut*  
 129 *Edgar* 130 and 166 *Go armed* II, i, 71 *ay* II, iii, 15 *bare*  
 III, iv, 127 *had* IV, vii, 24 *not* V, i, 16 *me*

The wording of the quarto text differs from that of the folio in hundreds of instances. In the present edition a quarto reading has been substituted for a folio reading only when the latter makes poor or obviously inferior sense. The list of such substitutions follows, with the adopted quarto readings in italics followed by the folio readings in roman. (In this appendix the readings of the quarto as well as the folio are given in modern spelling.)

I, i, 5 *equalities* qualities 74 *possesses* professes 170 *sentence*  
 sentences 188 *Gloucester* Cordelia 206 *on in* 221 *Fall'n* Fall  
 225 *well* will 248 *respects of fortune* respect and fortunes 302  
*hit* sit

I, iv, 1 *well* will 93 *Kent. Why, fool* Lear. Why, my boy 163 *e'er*  
 (from 'euer') ere 169 *fools* fool 194 *endurèd* endured 334  
*atasked* at task

II, i, 70 *I should* should I 79 *why* where 87 *strange news* strange-  
 ness 115 *Nature's* Nature's

II, ii, 21 *clamorous* clamors 70 *too t'* 73 *Renege* Revenge 74  
*gale* gall 118 *dread* dead 125 *respect* respects

II, iv, 2 *messenger* messengers 30 *panting* painting 33 *whose*  
 those 126 *mother's* mother 181 *fickle* 'fickly'

III, ii, 3 *drowned* drown

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III, iv, 52 *ford* sword 86 *deeply* dearly 109 *till the at* 126 *stock-*  
*punished* stocked, punished

III, v, 24 *dearer* dear

III, vi, 68 *take* tight 75 *makes* make

IV, i, 41 *Then prithee get thee gone* Get thee away

IV, ii, 75 *thereat enraged* threat-enaged 79 *justicers* justices

IV, iv, 18 *distress* desires

IV, vi, 17 *walk* walked 71 *enridgèd* enraged 83 *coining* crying  
 161 *small great* 201 *one a*

V, i, 46 *love* loves

V, iii, 83 *attaint* arrest 84 *sister* sisters 97 *he is he's* 161 *Goneril*  
 Bastard (i.e. Edmund) 278 *them* him

Omitted from the above list are a few instances of variation in which a folio misprint would have been detectable without reference to the quarto. Omitted from the following list are numerous instances of slight variation between quarto and folio in the use of articles, prepositions, elision, number, tense, etc., in which the literary interest is small. In all such instances the folio has been followed in the present edition, as well as in the variations listed below. Here the adopted folio readings are in italics followed by the quarto readings in roman. The great majority of the latter are, by common consent, inferior, but while these cast suspicion upon all, the fact remains that a certain number are not inferior to the folio readings and may represent what Shakespeare actually wrote. Marked with stars are the quarto readings which seem to the present editor best able to compete with the folio readings when judged from a purely literary point of view.

I, i, 20 *to into* 34 *the my* 35 *lord liege* 37 *Give me the map*  
*there. Know that we have divided* \**The map there. Know we*  
*have divided* 38 *fast first* 39 *from our age of our state* 40  
*Conferring* Confirming strengths years 45 *The princes* The  
*two great princes* 53 *Where nature doth with merit challenge*  
*Where merit doth most challenge it* 55 *love do love* 62 *speak*  
*do* 64 *shadowy shady* 68 *of Cornwall* \**to Cornwall?* Speak  
 69 *of that self mettle as my sister of the selfsame mettle that my*  
*sister is* 72 *comes too came* 78 *ponderous richer* 82 *conferred*  
*confirmed* 83 *our last and least* the last, not least in our dear  
 love 85 *draw win* 86 *sisters?* Speak sisters 90 *Nothing will*  
*How?* Nothing can 94 *How, how, Cordelia* Go to, Go to 95

## APPENDIX

you it 108 *Let Well, let* 118 *shall to my bosom shall* 130 *with*  
 in 135 *shall still* 149 *falls\* stoops Reserve thy state\* Reverse*  
 thy doom 156 *ne'er nor* 157 *motive the motive* 161 *Mis-*  
*creant Recreatant* 163 *Kill Do. Kill* 164 *gift doom* 166 *Hear*  
*me, recreant Hear me* 168 *That Since* *vows vow* 169 *strained*  
*strayed* 173 *Five Four* 174 *disasters \*diseases* 175 *sixth*  
*fifth* 180 *Fare Why, fare* 181 *Freedom Friendship* 182 *dear*  
*shelter protection* 190 *this a* 193 *Most royal Royal* 194 *hath*  
*what* 200 *more else* 202 *Will Sir, will* 204 *Dow'red Covered*  
 214 *whom that* 216 *The best, the dearest* *Most best, most*  
*dearest* 223 *Should Could* 226 *make known may know*  
 228 *unchaste \*unclean* 230 *richer rich* 232 *That As* 233  
*Better Go, to, go to. Better* 235 *but no more but* 239 *regards*  
*respects* 241 *a dowry and dower* *King Lear* 258 *of in* 259  
*Can Shall* 271 *Love Use* 276 *duty duties* 280 *plighted*  
*pleated* 281 *with shame shame them* 283 *not little not a little*  
 291 *grossly gross* 305 *of it on't*

I, ii, 10 *With base? with baseness? Bastardy base? Base* *With base,*  
*base bastardy* 15 *then the* 18 *legitimate. Fine word, 'legiti-*  
*mate'* *legitimate* 24 *prescribed subscribed* 38 *o'erlooking*  
*liking* 45 *policy and reverence policy* 68 *before heretofore* 70  
*heard him oft often heard him* 72 *declined declining* 76  
*sirrah sir* *I'll I* 85 *that he hath writ he hath wrote* 86 *other*  
*further* 100 *find see* 103 *reason it reason* 118 *on by* 120  
*spherical spiritual* 124 *on to a star stars* 129 *bastardiz-*  
*ing bastardy* 130 *pat out* 131 *Tom o' them of* 132-33  
*divisions. Fa, sol, la, mi divisions* 138 *with about* 139 *writes*  
*writ* 148 *The night Why, the night* 150 *Ay, two Two*

I, iii, 13 *fellows fellow servants to in* 14 *distaste dislike* 18 *my*  
*our* 21 *have said tell you* *Well Very well* 26 *course \*very*  
*course Prepare Go prepare*

I, iv, 20 *be'st be* 30 *canst thou canst* 43 *You, you You* 68 *my*  
*this* 72 *noted it well noted it* 75 *you, sir, you you sir, you sir*  
*hither, sir hither* 78-79 *your pardon you pardon me* 81 *strucken*  
*struck* 85 *sir, arise, away sir* 87 *Go to! Have you wisdom? So*  
*You have wisdom* 97 *did done* 106 *the Lady Brach Lady o'*  
*the Brach* 111 *nuncle uncle* 122 *Kent Lear* 123 *'tis like like*  
 125 *nuncle uncle* 131 *sweet one sweet fool* 158 *grace wit* 160  
*And They to wear do wear* 172 *lie, sirrah lie* 181 *You*  
*\*Methinks you* 183 *frowning \*frown* 188 *nor crust neither*  
*crust* 204 *Will Must* 205 *know trow* 210 *I would Come,*

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sir, I would *your* that 212 *transport* transform 216 *This*  
 Why, this 219 *Ha! Waking?* 'Tis Sleeping or waking? *Ha!*  
 Sure 'tis 227 *This admiration*, sir Come, sir, this admiration  
 229 *To understand* Understand 236 graced great 237 then  
 thou 248 *Woe* We repents repent's 261 *Lear, Lear, Lear*  
*Lear, Lear* 266 *Hear* Hark 280 *Away, away* Go, go, my  
 people 282 *more of it* the cause 294 *loose* make 296 *Ha!*  
*Let it be so. I have another daughter*\* *Let it be so.* Yet have I left a  
 daughter 301 *ever ever*. Thou shalt, I warrant thee *that that*,  
 my lord 304 *Pray you, content.* — *What, Oswald, ho* Come, sir,  
 no more 306 *tarry tarry* and 331 *No, no, Now* 333 *condemn*  
 dislike

I, v, 4 *afore* before 10 *not ne'er* 14 *can tell* what can what  
 15 *What canst tell, boy* Why, what canst thou tell, my boy 17  
*canst canst not i' th' middle on's* in the middle of his 31 *moe*  
 more 33 *Yes indeed* Yes 38 *till* before 40 *O, let me not be*  
*mad, not mad, sweet heaven* O, let me not be mad, sweet heaven.  
 I would not be mad 42 *How now, are* Are 45 *that's a* that is  
 46 *unless except*

II, i, 3-4 *Regan his Duchess his Duchess* 4 *this to* 7 *they there*  
 8 *ear-kissing*\* *ear-bussing* 11 *the the two* 13 *may do may* 18  
*I must act. Briefness must ask briefness work help* 23 *Corn-*  
*wall Cornwall* ought 27 *yourself* your — 30 *Draw, seem* Seem  
 31 *ho here* 32 *Fly, brother Fly, brother, fly* 39 *Mumbling*  
*Warbling* 40 *stand stand's* 43 *him, ho him* 46 *the thunder*  
*\*their thunders* 52 *latched latched* 56 *Full But* 62 *coward*  
*caitiff* 68 *would the reposal could the reposure* 73 *practice*  
*pretence* 76 *spirits*\* *spurs* 77 *O strange*\* *Strong* 78 *letter,*  
*said he letter* 90 *O madam Madam* it's cracked \*is cracked  
 97 *he was of that consort he was* 100 *th' expense and waste the*  
*waste and spoil* 120 *prize poise*

II, ii, 1 *dawning even* 5 *lov'st love* 15-16 *action-taking* action-  
 taking knave. A 16 *superserviceable, finical superfinical* 21  
*deny'st deny* 28 *night, yet night* 29 *You Draw, you* 32 *come*  
*with bring* 39 *Murder, murder* Murder! help 40 *matter?*  
*Part* matter 54 *they he* 55 *years o' th' trade hours at the*  
*trade* 64 *know you you have* 69 *atmain in twain* 72 *Being*  
*\*Bring the*\**their* 79 *drive send* 84 *fault offense* 90 *some a*  
 94 *An honest mind and plain* He must be plain 100 *faith sooth*  
 101 *great grand* 103 *mean'st mean'st thou* 113 *compact* con-  
 junct 120 *Fetch Bring* 121 *ancient miscreant* 122 *Sir, I I*

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127 Stocking Stopping 133 color nature 141 King his master  
 needs must King must 142 he he's 147 Cornwall. Come, my  
 lord, away \*Regan. Come, my good lord, away 152 out on't  
 155 taken took

II, iii, 1 heard hear 10 hairs in hair with 19 Sometimes Sometime  
 II, iv, 3 purpose in them purpose 5 Ha How 7 he look, he 8  
 heads heels 25 impose purpose 34 mein men 57 here within  
 within 58 here there 59 but than 60 None no 61 number  
 train 68 twenty a hundred 70 following following it 71  
 upward up the hill 74 which serves and seeks that serves 83  
 stocks, fool stocks 85 have travelled all the night travelled hard  
 to-night 91 Fiery? What quality What fiery quality 97 com-  
 mands - tends - service \*commands her service 99 Fiery? The  
 fiery Duke Fiery Duke that that Lear 111 Go tell Tell 116  
 O me, my heart, my rising heart! But down O my heart, my heart  
 118 knapped rapped 132 With Of 135 scant slack 143 his  
 \*her 148 you but you 153 Never No 163 blister blast her  
 pride 164 mood is on \*mood - 186 you yourselves yourselves  
 189 will you wilt thou 217 that's in that lies within 227 looked  
 look 230 you you are 251 look seem 258 need needs 267  
 man fellow 272 And let O let 293 best good 295 high \*bleak  
 296 ruffle rustle 297 scarce not

III, i, s.d. severally at several doors 1 Who's there besides What's  
 there beside 4 elements element 18 note art 20 is be 48  
 that \*your 53-54 King - in which your pain That way, I'll this  
 King - I'll this way, you that

III, ii, 5 of \*to 7 Strike Smite 16 tax task 18 Then Now then  
 22 will have join joined 42 are sit 49 fear force 50 pudder  
 pother 54 simular simular man 55 to in 58 concealing con-  
 tinents concealed centers 64 harder than the stones hard than is  
 the stone 71 And \*That 73 That's sorry That sorrows 74  
 has and has 77 Though For 78 boy my good boy

III, iii, 4 perpetual their 12 footed landed 13 look seek 15 If I  
 Though I 17 strange things some strange thing 23 The Then  
 doth do

III, iv, 4 enter here enter 6 contentious tempestuous 16 home  
 sure 22 enter here enter 29 storm night 46 blow the winds  
 \*blows the cold wind *Humh!* go Go bed \*cold bed 48  
 Didst thou give all to thy Hast given all to thy two 54 porridge  
 pottage 57 acold. O, do, de, do, de, do, de acold 60 there - and  
 there again - and there and there again 61 Has his What, his

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62 *Wouldst Didst* 66 *light fall* 74 *Alow, alow, loo, loo Alo, lo, lo* 77 *words' justice* \**words justly* 94 *says suum, mun hay* 96 *Thou Why, thou a thy* 98 *more than* \**more but* 100 *Ha!* *here's here's* 104 *contented*; 'tis content; this is 108 *foul foul fiend* 110 *squints* \**squemes* (i.e. *squinies*?) 132 *Smulkin Snulbug* 148 *same most* 152 *him once more him* 162 *mercy, sir mercy* 173 *tower came town come*

III, v, 9 *letter which* \**letter* 11 *this his*

III, vi, 68 *Or bobtail* \**Bobtail* 69 *him them* 71 *leaped* \**leap* 72 *Do, de, de, de. Sessa Loudla doodla* 76 *these hard hearts this hardness* 78 *You will You'll Persian Persian attire* 80 *here and rest here* 82 *So, so. We'll go to supper i' th' morning* So, so, so. We'll go to supper i' th' morning. So, so, so 93 *up, take up up the King*

III, vii, 3 *traitor villain* 23 *Though well Though* 32 *I'm none I am true* 42 *answered answerer* 53 *answer first answer* 58 *stick* \**rash* (meaning 'rip') 59 *bare lowed* 62 *rain rage* 63 *stern* \**dearn* (meaning 'drear') 65 *subscribe* \**subscribed* 73 *served you served* 79 *Nay Why* 81 *you have* \**yet have you* 86 *enkindle unbridle* 87 *treacherous villain villain*

IV, i, 4 *esperance experience* 9 *But who comes Who's* 10 *poorly led parti, eyd (sic)* 14 *These fourscore years This fourscore* – 17 *You Alack, sir, you* 36 *flies to flies are to th'* 45 *Which Who* 52 *daub dance* 54 *And yet I must. – Bless Bless* 57–58 *thee, good man's son the good man*

IV, ii, 17 *names* \**arms* 28 *My fool A fool body bed* 29 *whistle whistling* 60 *seems* \**shows* 73 *thrilled thralled*

IV, iv, 10 *helps can help* 26 *importuned important*

IV, v, 15 *him, madam him* 40 *party Lady*

IV, vi, 1 *I we* 8 *In With* 46 *sir! Friend sir* 51 *Thou'dst Thou hadst* 65 *How is't How* 73 *make them made their* 78 *'twould would it* 89 *this piece of this* 91–92 *I' th' clout, i' th' clout in the air, hah* 96 *Goneril with a white beard* Goneril, ha Regan 104 *ague-proof* argue-proof 127 *sulphurous sulphury* 128 *consumption* consummation 130 *sweeten* \**to sweeten* 132 *Let me Here* 138 *thy the see see one* 148 *this the* 150–51 *change places and, handy-dandy* Handy-dandy 159 *Thou Thy blood* 161 *clothes rags* 169 *Now, now, now, now* No, now 177 *wawl wail* Mark Mark me 182 *felt. I'll put't in proof* felt 186 *dear daughter – dear –* 192 *a man a man a man* 195 *smug bridegroom* bridegroom 198 *Come Nay* 199 *running. Sa, sa,*

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*sa, sa running 207 sound sense 217 tame to lame by 224 old  
most 237 ballow bat 246 English \*British 252 these his  
264 servant \*servant, and for you her own for venture (sic)  
277 severed \*fencèd*

**IV, vii, 16** *jarring hurrying 32 opposed exposed jarring \*war-  
ring 36 enemy's injurious 58 hand hands 59 You No, sir,  
you mock me mock 61 upward, not an hour more nor less up-  
ward 70 I am ! I am I am 79 killed cured 84 Pray you Pray*

**V, i, 21** *heard hear 36 Pray Pray you 46 And machination ceases.  
Fortune Fortune 52 true great*

**V, ii, 1** *tree bush*

**V, iii, 8** *No, no, no, no No, no 25 starved starve 43 I We 62  
might should 68 addition advancement 78 him him then  
81 thine good 90 Gloucester. Let the trumpet sound Gloucester  
91 person head 93 make prove 96 medicine poison 99 the thy  
105 My This 110-11 within the lists in the host 113 by at  
120 name, your name and 124 cope \*cope withal 129-30 my  
privilege, The privilege of mine honors the privilege of my tongue  
136 Conspirant Conspicuate 138 below thy foot beneath thy  
feet 144 tongue being 146 rule right 147 Back Here 152  
practice \*mere practice 153 war \*arms 155 Shut \*Stop 156  
stop \*stopple it. - Hold, sir it 157 name thing 172 plague  
\*scourge 174 right ; 'tis true truth 186 we with 191 Their  
The 197 our my 223 help ! O, help help 225 of - O, she's  
dead of 226 Who dead ? Speak, man Who, man ? Speak 228  
poisonèd ; she confesses poisoned ; she hath confessed 232  
judgment justice 233 is this 'tis 252 Edgar Albany 258  
Howl, howl, howl Howl, howl, howl, howl 270 you murderers  
your murderous 274 woman women 281 brag bragged and  
or 283 This is a dull sight. Are Are 289 first life 306 no, no,  
no no, no 308 Thou 'lt O, thou wilt 309 Never, never, never,  
never, never Never, never, never 310 sir sir. o, o, o, o 316 He  
O, he 324 Edgar Albany 326 hath \*have*





# THE PELICAN SHAKESPEARE

AND ITS EDITORS

General Editor: *Alfred Harbage*

## THE COMEDIES

The Comedy of Errors *Paul A. Jorgensen*

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A Midsummer Night's Dream *Madeleine Doran*

Love's Labor's Lost *Alfred Harbage*

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Twelfth Night *Charles T. Prouty*

The Merry Wives of Windsor *Fredson Bowers*

All's Well That Ends Well *Jonas A. Barish*

Measure for Measure *R. C. Bald*

## THE HISTORIES

Henry the Sixth, 1 *David Bevington*

Henry the Sixth, 2 and 3 *Robert K. Turner Jr, George Walton Williams*

Richard the Third *G. Blakemore Evans*

King John *Irving Ribner*

Richard the Second *Matthew W. Black*

Henry the Fourth, 1 *M. A. Shaaber*

Henry the Fourth, 2 *Allan G. Chester*

Henry the Fifth *Alfred Harbage*

Henry the Eighth *F. David Hoeniger*

## THE TRAGEDIES

Titus Andronicus *Gustav Cross*

Romeo and Juliet *John E. Hankins*

Julius Caesar *S. F. Johnson*

Hamlet *Willard Farnham*

Troilus and Cressida *Virgil K. Whitaker*

Othello *Gerald Eades Bentley*

King Lear *Alfred Harbage*

Macbeth *Alfred Harbage*

Timon of Athens *Charlton Hinman*

Antony and Cleopatra *Maynard Mack*

Coriolanus *Harry Levin*

## THE ROMANCES

Pericles *James G. McManaway*

Cymbeline *Robert B. Heilman*

The Winter's Tale *Baldwin Maxwell*

The Tempest *Northrop Frye*

## THE NON-DRAMATIC POETRY

The Narrative Poems *Richard Wilbur*

The Sonnets *Douglas Bush*



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